

## Tilburg University

### Language teaching and learning in a multicultural context

Bezemer, J.; Kroon, S.; de Wal Pastoor, L.; Ryen, E.; Heen Wold, A.

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**Jeff Bezemer, Sjaak Kroon,  
Lutine de Wal Pastoor, Else Ryen,  
Astri Heen Wold**

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**Case Studies from Primary Education  
in the Netherlands and Norway**



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## Preface

This book describes the background and outcomes of a Dutch-Norwegian comparative research project concerning education for pupils from language minorities. In this study, language minority pupils or children refer to pupils belonging to new, i.e., non-indigenous language groups in Norway and the Netherlands. The project was mainly carried out in two multilingual primary school classrooms, one in the Netherlands and one in Norway. Classroom case studies employing an ethnographic research methodology were used to describe and understand the ways in which teachers and pupils deal with aspects of multilingualism and create opportunities for language learning in their day-to-day practices.

The project was supported by different Dutch and Norwegian institutions. The research carried out in the Netherlands was funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of the Netherlands and carried out at Babylon, Centre for Studies of the Multicultural Society at Tilburg University. The team included Jeff Bezemer, Guus Extra, Sjaak Kroon, and Jan Sturm. The Norwegian activities were funded by the Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs of Norway, and, from 2000, by the Norwegian Board of Education, and carried out at the Department of Education at the University of Oslo. The Norwegian team included Lutine de Wal Pastoor, Else Ryen, Elena Tuveng, and Astri Heen Wold. The book was written by Jeff Bezemer, Sjaak Kroon, Lutine de Wal Pastoor, Else Ryen, and Astri Heen Wold. While they all contributed substantially to every chapter of the book through engagement in data collection, analysis, discussions, workshops, or feedback, they have contributed to different parts of the book to different degrees. Jeff Bezemer, Sjaak Kroon, and Astri Heen Wold are the main authors of Part I, and Jeff Bezemer and Sjaak Kroon are the main authors of Part II. With respect to Part III, Lutine de Wal Pastoor is the main author of Chapters 8, 9, 11, 14, and 15 (excluding Section 15.4), Astri Heen Wold of Chapters 10, 12, 13, and 17, and of Section 15.4, and Else Ryen of Chapter 16. Jeff Bezemer and Astri Heen Wold are the main authors of



Part IV. Jeff Bezemer, Sjaak Kroon, and Astri Heen Wold have taken care of the final editing of the book.

In Part I of the book, we briefly go into the history and background of the project, the research questions, and the methodology. In this context, special attention is given to the classroom as a language learning setting and to the selection of the classrooms in which the project was carried out. In Part II and III, the Dutch and Norwegian case studies are presented. The main focus is on a number of classroom episodes which illustrate various language teaching and learning activities in different contexts. The Dutch episodes deal with vocabulary, spelling, and mathematics teaching and learning in the regular classroom, the Dutch as a second language classroom, and mother tongue classes for language minorities. The Norwegian episodes deal with various forms of discourse and interaction, vocabulary, and mathematics in the regular as well as the Norwegian as a second language classroom. The results from the main research school and two other schools concerning mother tongue education for language minority children are also reported in this part. The episodes are discussed in the light of the national and local educational contexts and the characteristics of the school, teachers, and pupils. In Part IV, we discuss some important similarities and differences between what happens in the Dutch and Norwegian classrooms and connect these to the diverse educational contexts of the two countries.

In international comparative research, problems easily arise with respect to the terminology that should be used in relation to similar phenomena that have different names in different countries. In this book, the national terminology is used whenever we discuss a phenomenon within its national context. More specific details regarding terminology can be found in the introductions to Part II and III.

To make this book accessible to the broad audience of policy makers, teacher educators, and teachers, we have attempted to avoid using technical language and giving overly detailed methodological and theoretical accounts in this book. The same applies to the transcripts of interactions, which contain only a few special symbols (see Appendix). Such details are given in other publications reporting on this project (Tuveng 2001; Tuveng & Wold forthcoming; Ryen, Wold & Pastoor forthcoming; Wold 2002, 2003; Bezemer 2003; Pastoor forthcoming). Our hope is that the book may function as an inspiration and source for different types of discussions aiming at a better understanding of language minority children's school experiences and teachers' ways of

dealing with multilingualism. We believe, for example, that the classroom episodes we present are relevant for discussions about the impact of policy on actual classroom practices. We also believe that the book is highly relevant for teachers who want to achieve a better understanding of their own communicative behaviour in the multicultural classroom.

We want to express our gratitude to the different supporting institutions for the opportunity to participate in this research. It has given all of us increased understanding of what goes on in multicultural classrooms. Roos Koole, Frans Kraaijenbrink, and Mariët Wellink (Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, the Netherlands) and Bodhild Baasland (initially, Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs, later, Norwegian Board of Education, Norway) were the research group's contact persons during the project period. We want to thank them all for their help and continuing interest. While the Ministries have funded this research, it is the research group alone that takes responsibility for the content of this book and the opinions expressed in it.

As already noted, the main data on which this book is based were collected in two classes in two primary schools, *de Rietschans* in the Netherlands and *Ekelund* in Norway. For reasons of confidentiality, we cannot reveal their real names, but the schools, the teachers, the parents, and the children should know that we greatly appreciate the trust and generosity they have shown by welcoming us into their classrooms, as well as the cooperation given to us during the project period. The same applies to the school administrators, teachers, parents, and children in the Norwegian schools where some additional data were collected. Without their support, this research project could not have been realised. Warm thanks go to them all.

Oslo and Tilburg, October 2004

Jeff Bezemer  
Sjaak Kroon  
Lutine de Wal Pastoor  
Else Ryen  
Astri Heen Wold



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## **Part I**

### **Introduction**

In this part a general introduction is given to the joint Dutch-Norwegian comparative research project from which this book originated. First of all an overview is provided of the project's background and its relationship to initiatives of the Ministries of Education, both in the Netherlands and Norway, wanting to gain a deeper insight into everyday practices in multicultural classrooms as a possible basis for policy development. After that the project's central focus on language minority children's learning of their second language and on the importance of classroom communication for this learning are discussed. Then the project's research questions are dealt with. These aim at improving the understanding of how language minority children participate and perform in regular education and how they acquire competence in the national language of the country of residence, as well as in their mother tongues. Finally the project's design is presented, which is characterised as an in-depth ethnographic case study, staying as close as possible to the phenomena under investigation, not aiming at formulating general conclusions.





## Chapter 1

# An ethnographic study in two countries

### 1.1 Background

This book on language teaching and learning in multicultural primary school classrooms in the Netherlands and Norway is the result of a joint Dutch-Norwegian research project that was carried out between 1998 and 2003. Generally speaking, the impetus for the project was the fact that the number of children with a language minority background in European countries at the time had been increasing considerably over the years. Furthermore, demographic data showed that this process was not likely to come to an end in the foreseeable future. What was true for Europe as a whole was also true for the Netherlands and Norway. In the year 1999, 2.7 million inhabitants of a total population of 15.7 million people in the Netherlands had at least one parent who was born outside the country (CBS 2004). In the same year, the number of immigrants in Norway amounted to 260,742, making up nearly six per cent of the total number of almost four and a half million inhabitants (SSB 2000).

The cultural diversity brought about by this migration manifested itself in pupil populations in the primary schools in both countries. In 1999, 15 per cent of 1.6 million primary school pupils in the Netherlands were registered as belonging to 'cultural minorities', which means that their parents were refugees or that at least one of them was born in Turkey, Surinam, Morocco, the Dutch Antilles and Aruba, or any other country from an exhaustive list of non-Western countries drawn up by the government (CBS 2004). In Norway, approximately 38,600, i.e., 6.6 per cent, of the 580,300 compulsory school age pupils in the school year 1999/2000 were registered as language minority pupils (SSB 2000).

For the majority of these children, languages other than the national standard languages of their country of residence are also important means of communication. Apart from Dutch and Norwegian, a great many different home languages are spoken in the Netherlands and Norway. The main non-indigenous home languages in the Netherlands are Turkish, Arabic, Berber, English, Hind(ustan)i, Papiamentu, French, German, Sranan Tongo, and Spanish (Extra *et al.* 2002). The main

minority languages in Norway are Urdu, English, Vietnamese, Spanish, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian, Albanian, Turkish, Somali, and Tamil (SSB 2000).

Thus, in both countries, teachers have to deal with multilingual pupil populations in their everyday teaching practice. In spite of the undoubtedly considerable teacher efforts to maximise the educational opportunities of all the children in their classes, it is well documented that language minority pupils run a high risk of underachievement as compared to their majority classmates, and, consequently, of unsuccessful school and professional careers (for Norway, see Engen, Kulbrandstad & Sand 1996 and Bakken 2003; for the Netherlands, see Tesser & Iedema 2001; for North-Western Europe, see Walraven & Broekhof 1998). One of the central educational demands European countries will have to deal with in the years to come will thus be the linguistic and cultural diversity in education and improving the educational opportunities and achievement of language minority children. Improving the quality of education for language minority children is of great importance for both individual children and society as a whole.

As in other European countries, there have been ongoing political and public debates in the Netherlands and Norway on the education of language minority children, accompanied by demands for more research to serve as a basis for policy development. Against the background of such common developments and concerns, it seemed useful for the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science and the Norwegian Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs to become acquainted with each other's endeavours and experiences in this field. Therefore, a Dutch-Norwegian cooperative network was established for exchange and discussion, and a bilateral research project was set up to acquire a deeper mutual understanding of education in multicultural societies and the educational problems encountered by language minority pupils.

The initiative for this Dutch-Norwegian collaboration dates back to 1994, when the first contacts were established between the Minister of Education, Culture, and Science of the Netherlands, Mr Jo Ritzen, and the Minister of Education, Research, and Church Affairs of Norway, Mr Gudmund Hernes. This initiative resulted in a prolonged contact between politicians, administrators, and researchers in the two countries with the aim of finding suitable forms of cooperation. In the years 1995, 1996, and 1997, there were joint meetings with school visits both in the

Netherlands (Rotterdam, Zoetermeer) and Norway (Oslo, Drammen). As a follow-up to the 1997 meeting, it was decided to try to gain a deeper insight into everyday practices in multicultural classrooms in Norway and the Netherlands by means of an international comparative research project. Babylon, Centre for Studies of the Multicultural Society at Tilburg University, and the Department of Psychology at the University of Oslo, were invited by the Ministries to present a joint research proposal. In 1997, a proposal was submitted entitled 'Language learning in a multicultural context'. In 1998, this proposal was accepted (Proposal 1998).

Setting up a joint comparative research project was believed, by all parties involved, to be invaluable because it would create the possibility of building not only on one's own theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of multilingualism and education, but also of combining the experiences of two countries and of each having the special benefit of an outsider's eye looking at the national scene. Apart from being valuable from a policy-making point of view, comparing the Netherlands and Norway was also considered interesting from a research perspective. After all, the two countries show both differences and similarities in terms of their socio-economic and educational-political development, immigration history, and contemporary immigration figures and developments.

## **1.2 Focus**

Focusing in particular on the language minority children's learning of their second language, we wanted to emphasise the importance of classroom communication for this learning. It is well known that many children from language minority backgrounds start school with weak competence in their second language. This is also the case for many language minority children born in the country. It is often believed that language minority children learn their second language primarily through play with other children with a higher competence in the target language and that the teacher plays a minor role in this connection. But for many children, the classroom offers the situation in which they most frequently, and to the highest degree, come in contact with their second language (Wong Fillmore 1989; Pastoor 1998). The task awaiting both teachers and children is thus a highly challenging one: Within the class-

room, the language minority children must concurrently learn and further develop their second language, as well as learn the content of the lessons through this very language.

Schools are highly language dependent. Knowledge is to a great extent communicated by way of language, and the pupils have to demonstrate what they know primarily by speaking and writing. The way language is used in schools also differs from that in many other social contexts. In schools, knowledge is often transmitted by language alone, and understanding is less supported by non-linguistic cues than in many other forms of communication. The school form of communication is often characterised as 'decontextualised' or 'context-independent' in contrast to the 'context-dependent' form of informal conversations. Using decontextualised language is more demanding than using language in a context-dependent way (Cummins 1984, 2000), and different cultural groups use these forms of communication to different degrees in their homes (Heath 1982). In addition, communication in schools is characterised by a broader and more varied vocabulary than the children usually encounter. Hence, many children have to learn to use language in the ways and with the varied vocabulary used in school, in school itself. This point again emphasises the importance of the classroom as a language learning setting.

For language minority children to develop sufficient competence in a second language to succeed in school is usually a time-consuming process (Thomas & Collier 2002). Cummins & Swain (1986) claim that it takes about two years to develop second language proficiency to the level required for social encounters, but that it takes between five and seven years, on the average, for pupils to approach grade norms in second language academic skills. Wong Fillmore (1989) emphasises the individual variation in this second language learning process. The process is affected by different factors, for example, the social and cultural background of the child, emotional and motivational factors, the proportion of target language speakers and second language learners in the learning settings, and organisation of education.

Given that it is difficult to learn a second language to the level necessary in school, it seems important to support the language development in different ways, for example, by lessons in the target language as a second language. It is also essential to ensure that language minority children are able to learn the school content presented before their

second language is well developed. In this connection, bilingual content learning and mother tongue education are decisive (Wold 1992).

Second language communication in classrooms has to serve more than one function. On the one hand, the communication is important for the teaching of the thematic content of the lesson, for example, mathematics, history, or the target language itself. On the other hand, it is a crucial part of the language input necessary to stimulate further development of the pupils' second language proficiency. In this context, it is taken for granted that language can be learned in different ways. It can be learned directly by means of intentional language learning tasks. But it can also be learned incidentally in communicational episodes that do not have language learning as the primary goal (Ellis 1999).

From the preceding points, it is clear that the study of language teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms encompasses a broad scope of learning contexts and processes. Different contexts as well as both intentional and incidental language learning have accordingly been explored in the present project.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The general aim of the project was to improve the understanding of how language minority children participate and perform in regular education and how they acquire competence in the national language of the country of residence, on the one hand, and in their mother tongues or home languages, on the other. The communicative interaction was studied in a variety of classroom contexts in the Netherlands and Norway from a comparative perspective in order to describe and understand what kind of communicative interactions teachers and children were involved in during the teaching/learning activities of their school days. The following teaching and learning contexts were explored:

- the regular classroom, consisting of language minority and majority pupils, focusing on different school subjects, including Dutch and Norwegian;
- separate classes, or special supportive arrangements within the regular classroom, focusing on the teaching of Dutch or Norwegian as a second language;

- separate classes, or special supportive arrangements within the regular classroom, set up to teach language minority children their mother tongue or to use it as a language of instruction.

Our research questions were primarily and deliberately located at the micro level of teachers' and pupils' classroom activities and communication. In order to be able to understand these classroom practices, the macro and meso educational context was used as a frame of reference. With respect to the macro level, the national, regional and local policies concerning multilingualism and education in the Netherlands and Norway were described and analysed. With respect to the meso level, the ways in which the participating schools dealt with multiculturalism and multilingualism institutionally were described and analysed.

## 1.4 Design

Language teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms can be investigated in different ways. Many studies opt for an approach in which high numbers of classrooms and pupils are included, in which standardised tests and procedures are used, and in which sophisticated computer-based data analysis techniques are adopted, aiming at general conclusions about, for example, relationships between classroom organisation, on the one hand, and pupils' school performance and success, on the other hand. Such studies are important. Our approach, however, is of another kind. We present an in-depth ethnographic case study of primary school classrooms in the Netherlands and in Norway, staying as close as possible to the phenomena under investigation, working *in vivo*, not *in vitro* (Jackson 1990; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Green & Bloome 1997).

A study of this kind does not aim at formulating general conclusions. Rather, it aims to understand actual, i.e., naturally occurring classroom behaviour. We believe that such detailed studies are necessary to fully understand the web of processes influencing children's learning opportunities in multicultural classrooms. After all, it is in the microcosmos of the classroom that actual teaching and learning takes place. In that light, ethnographic studies into multicultural classrooms are now being called for (Hyltenstam 1996; Ryen & Wold 1996; Gogolin & Kroon 2000).

In each country, one main classroom was selected on the basis of a number of considerations. One major consideration was the ecological

validity of the classrooms under study with respect to pupil characteristics. We selected two schools from urban areas that were characterised by low socio-economic and low educational backgrounds. Both schools had been relatively successful in developing a certain level of awareness on the part of the teachers with respect to multilingualism. As regards the ethnic composition of the classrooms, we aimed to select classrooms with a proportion of approximately 40 per cent language minority children and about 60 per cent native Dutch or Norwegian pupils speaking the dominant school language as their first (and usually sole) language.

Another consideration was the comparability of the classrooms in terms of the pupils' age and grade level and their level of literacy. In the Netherlands, learning to read and write starts in the third grade of primary school, when the average age of the pupils is six. In Norway, literacy lessons start in the second year, when the pupils are about seven years old. An additional consideration was that in Norway, a new national curriculum for the ten-year compulsory school, *Læreplanverket for den 10-årige grunnskolen* (Læreplanverket 1996), usually referred to as *Læreplan 97* or just *L97*, was introduced in 1997. As a consequence of this reform, the first cohort of pupils following this curriculum were in the third grade in the school year 1999/2000, i.e., the year in which we were to collect our data. All in all, this led us to select a third grade classroom with eight-year-old pupils in Norway which, in terms of the pupils' experiences in learning to read and write, was comparable to the fourth grade classroom with seven-year-old pupils that we selected in the Netherlands.

With these considerations in mind, access was gained to a fourth grade classroom of *de Rietschans* primary school in the city of Stolberg, the Netherlands, and to a third grade classroom at *Ekelund* primary school in Oslo, Norway. In addition, some classrooms at other schools were included in the Norwegian part of the investigation. In Part II and III, the schools and classes will be described in more detail.

Data from these schools and classes were gathered by using a set of different research methods resulting in a data corpus consisting of

- audio recordings in the Netherlands and audio and video recordings in Norway of the regular class and withdrawal classes for teaching the first or second language of language minority pupils;



- field notes resulting from non-participant observations accompanying the recordings. In addition, non-participant observations without recordings were also sometimes carried out in the Norwegian case;
- long interviews (McCracken 1988) with the regular class teachers before the period of observation;
- retrospective interviews dealing with (the interpretation of) classroom transcripts, mainly after the period of observation;
- interviews with teachers of Dutch and Norwegian as a second language, mother tongue teachers of language minority children, and other teachers involved in teaching our classrooms, such as the remedial teachers and other school staff;
- interviews with head teachers and some deputy heads;
- (in the Norwegian case) semi-structured interviews with all the pupils from the research class and some pupils from other schools;
- school documents, such as information booklets, pupils' work and report cards, test results, teaching materials, and teacher logs;
- (in the Norwegian case) some language proficiency tests and tests aiming at evaluating the children's ability to handle information given in the Norwegian language.

The main research classes at *de Rietschans* and *Ekelund* were observed and recorded for the whole week just following the autumn holiday in 1999. In addition, observations with and without recordings were carried out at different times throughout the school year. At *de Rietschans*, a total of 61 hours of classroom interaction in the regular class were audio taped and observed, as well as six hours of Dutch as a second language teaching and one and a half hours of mother tongue teaching in withdrawal classes. In addition to the whole week observation of 25 hours, *Ekelund* was visited approximately 40 days for observations during ordinary teaching times. Lessons in the regular class, lessons in Norwegian as a second language, and lessons given by the mother tongue teachers were attended. These observations differed in terms of the number of hours, the number of observers (one or two), and the extent to which they were accompanied by some kind of recording. The observers also visited *Ekelund* and *de Rietschans* on special occasions, such as parent meetings, and joined the class on outings, such as skating.

Different types of ethnographic procedures were followed to reduce, structure, analyse, and interpret the data. An important tool in this respect was the compilation of a synopsis of classroom observations

containing all the information required to select meaningful classroom episodes for further analysis. 'Meaningful' in this context means that the episodes in one way or another shed light on the main questions of the study. The treatment of these episodes was in some cases derived from the procedure for the selection and analysis of key incidents (see Kroon & Sturm 2000). In terms of Green & Bloome (1997:186), with this procedure,

"the ethnographer identifies key events or incidents (e.g., recurrent events and events that have sustaining influence); describes these events or incidents in functional and relational terms; explores links to other incidents, events, phenomena, or theoretical constructs, places the events in relation to other events or to wider social contexts; and then constructs a description so that others may see what members of a social group need to know, produce, understand, interpret, and produce to participate in appropriate ways."

In other cases, the selection of episodes to be reported was made more directly on the basis of theories of learning and, in particular, theories of language learning.

Apart from the fact that, generally speaking, the same research questions and methodology were applied in comparable classrooms, the international and multidisciplinary composition of the Dutch/Norwegian research team allowed for a 'triangulation' of perspectives that otherwise would not have been possible (see Kroon & Sturm 2000). The preliminary selection of some of the meaningful incidents from the Dutch and Norwegian classroom observations, for example, was the result of a joint enterprise of the two research teams that took place at a series of international workshops. In analysing many of the incidents, international triangulation was also applied by systematically paying attention to the outsiders' view on the data. This way of 'making the familiar strange' led to insights into the data that could not have been reached in a monofocal approach (Erickson 1984).



## Part II

### The case of the Netherlands

In this part, the outcomes of the classroom case study carried out in *de Rietschans* primary school in the Netherlands are discussed. The part consists of six chapters. In Chapter 2, the education system and the Dutch educational compensatory policies are described in brief. In Chapter 3, the school, the teacher, and the pupils are introduced. In the Chapters 4-6, classroom episodes are discussed that shed light on language practices in the fourth grade of this school. These episodes illustrate how the pupils and teachers work on Dutch vocabulary in the regular class as well as in Dutch as a second language (DL2) and language minority classes taught outside the regular class (i.e., in withdrawal classes). In addition, an episode is discussed in which the regular class deals with a spelling lesson. Finally, an episode is presented focusing on the regular teacher's language of instruction in a mathematics lesson. In Chapter 7, conclusions are drawn from these episodes in the context of the policy of the Dutch government and the school with respect to the teaching of, and in, Dutch to multilingual pupil populations.

A brief note on Dutch terminology used in the field of education and multilingualism in the Netherlands is in place here. In formal and informal Dutch, the word *allochtonen* is often used to distinguish an idiosyncratically defined subgroup of individuals residing in the Netherlands from those taken to represent the indigenous population, who are usually referred to as *autochtonen*. In quotations from Dutch sources appearing in this part, the term *allochtone leerlingen* (literally: allochthonous pupils) was translated as 'immigrant minority pupils' if it appeared that the person quoted was referring to the social position of the pupils concerned. If the quotee was referring to the language background of the pupils, the term was translated as 'non-native Dutch pupils'. The

term *autochtone leerlingen* (literally: autochthonous pupils) was translated as 'native Dutch pupils'. In official regulations issued by the Ministry of Education, one comes across the terms *cumi-leerlingen*, i.e., pupils from cultural minorities defined as such by the Ministry, and *0.90-leerlingen*, i.e., *cumi-leerlingen* whose parents are considered working class. These are referred to as 'cumi-pupils' and '0.90-pupils' respectively. All other Dutch terms were translated literally.

Quotations from interviews with the form teacher are referred to as 'Ed', followed by an interview number and a page number of the transcript. Interviews with the Turkish immigrant minority teacher are referred to as 'Fatima', again followed by interview and page numbers. They were interviewed several times. The interviews Ed 2-7 and Fatima 2 refer to retrospective interviews in which the interviewee reflects upon observed practices. The other interviews took place before observations had been carried out in their classrooms. The interviews with the DL2 teacher and the head teacher are referred to as 'Nanda', and 'Jan', respectively, followed by a page number.

## Chapter 2

### The educational context

#### 2.1 The education system

The foundations of the Dutch education system are laid down in Article 23 of the constitution of the Netherlands. This article declares education to be an object of continuous concern to the government, and charges the government to ensure that there is a sufficient number of public primary schools. Apart from that, the freedom of education is guaranteed. This implies the freedom to found schools, to determine the denomination or ideological outlook on which education is based, and to organise the teaching. The freedom of organisation of teaching, however, can be constrained by the legislator (Onderwijsraad 2002). Since 1917, after a lengthy ‘school struggle’, these non-public schools, which are run by associations or foundations, have been funded by the state to the same degree as public schools, which are run by municipal authorities. In 2001, 33.6 per cent of all primary schools were public schools, 29.8 per cent were Protestant schools, and 29.9 per cent were Roman Catholic schools. The remaining 6.7 per cent were schools based on minority denominations, including Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism (Ministerie van OCW 2002).

While the government is bound by the schools’ constitutional right to determine the content and methodology of their teaching, the constitution prescribes that the government formulates legal requirements to guarantee the ‘soundness’ of all funded education. The curricular requirements for the *basisschool* (primary school) are chiefly laid down in the *Wet Primair Onderwijs* (2004) (Primary Education Act). This act prescribes that primary education should

- enable pupils to develop continuously;
- be geared to the development of the pupil;
- be aimed at emotional, cognitive, and creative development, the acquisition of knowledge, and social, cultural, and physical skills;
- take into account that pupils grow up in a multicultural society;
- provide pupils in need of additional care with individual coaching;
- monitor pupils in need of additional care;

- in the case of special education, be aimed at having pupils integrate in non-special education;
- ensure that pupils receive at least 3,520 hours of schooling in the first four years, and 4,000 hours in the following four years of primary education, yet no more than 5.5 hours per day, unless activities aimed at combating educational disadvantages require this.

The subjects to be dealt with are referred to as sensorial and physical education, the Dutch language, arithmetic and mathematics, the English language, some fields of knowledge, expressive activities, and the promotion of social and physical well-being. These subjects are elaborated in *kerndoelen* (core objectives), which describe the minimum achievement levels with respect to knowledge, understanding, and proficiencies that should be reached by the end of primary school (Kerndoelen 1998). Schools in the province of Friesland are required to provide instruction in Frisian as a subject as well, unless the provincial authorities have granted exemption. Schools are free in dividing the school time over these subjects.

The Primary Education Act further states that the curriculum be taught in Dutch. If, in addition to Dutch, Frisian or another regional language is in active use, the language concerned can be used as a language of communication alongside Dutch. During the primary reception of pupils with a non-Dutch cultural background in Dutch education, the language of the country of origin can be used as the language of communication following a code of conduct to be drawn up by the competent authority. The Primary Education Act also contains regulations with respect to provisions for teaching the mother tongue of language minority pupils or for using these languages as languages of instruction throughout the curriculum.

Although schools are also free in the grouping of pupils, most schools organise education according to an eight-group system, in which pupils pass on to the next level in a new school year. Schools occasionally decide to have underachieving pupils repeat a year. Thus, in principle, primary school lasts eight years. The *Leerplichtwet* (Compulsory Education Act) indicates that children must attend school from the first school day of the month following their fifth birthday. However, the vast majority of children go to primary school when they are four years old, which implies that by the age of twelve, they have usually enrolled in secondary school. Compulsory education lasts up to and including the school year in which the pupil turns sixteen, or until the pupil has had at

least twelve years of schooling. Municipal authorities see to it that the prescriptions concerning compulsory education are observed. At the end of primary school, the head teacher, who is, in most cases, informed by the outcomes of a standardised achievement test, advises parents regarding which of the three streams or levels of secondary education would be best for this child. Each of these secondary school streams prepares pupils for a specific form of vocational or academic education. The four-year *vmbo* prepares pupils for secondary vocational education, the five-year *havo* for higher professional education, and the six-year *vwo* for academic education.

The Inspectorate of Education sees to it that the legal regulations are observed by the schools. Its mission is to guarantee and promote the quality of education by periodically visiting schools and subsequently assessing and reporting on the quality of education offered by the schools. All school reports are accessible to the public through the Inspectorate's website. The teaching/learning process, the achievements, and the conditions of the school are assessed in relation to the characteristics of the school. As regards the standards the Inspectorate adheres to, it is explained that

“on the basis of legislation the Inspectorate has determined the characteristics of a good school. [...] Sometimes the legislator merely indicates a direction that needs further shaping in practice. In those cases the Inspectorate has made explicit what can reasonably be expected from schools.” (Inspectie van het Onderwijs 2000:7)

The Inspectorate's assessments are based on classroom observation, interviews with practitioners, and examination of school policy documents, such as the school plan and the school guide. Every four years, schools are required to draw up a school plan in which they describe their policies on pedagogy, staff, and control and improvement of the quality of education. The school guide is an annual prospectus intended to inform parents, caretakers, and pupils about the policies, rules, and past performance of the school. Several educational services support schools in reaching the standards of the Inspectorate, including local school advisory services, national pedagogic centres, the National Institute for Curriculum Development (*SLO*), the National Institute for Educational Measurement (*Cito*), the Educational Innovation Centre for Primary Education (*PMPO*), and the university-based Expert Centre for Dutch.



## 2.2 Educational compensatory policies

In the Netherlands, the staff size of a primary school is dependent on the 'weight' of its pupils. Therefore, schools are required to register *cumi-leerlingen* (pupils from cultural minorities). Pupils are registered as such if at least one of the parents was born in one of the countries mentioned in Table 2.1. The children of admitted refugees and pupils belonging to the Moluccan community (irrespective of their parents' country of birth) are listed among the members of a cultural minority as well. Table 2.1 shows the size of each of these groups of pupils in October 2001.

Country of origin	Number of pupils
Turkey	55,600
Morocco	47,600
Surinam	35,300
Dutch Antilles and Aruba	13,300
Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Portugal, Spain, Cape Verde, Moluccan Islands, Tunisia	20,900
Non-English-speaking countries outside Europe, except for Indonesia	40,600
Refugees	23,300
Total number of cumi pupils	236,700
Total number of primary school pupils	1,552,200

Table 2.1: Cumi pupils in primary education, in 2001 (source: Ministerie van OCW 2002:15)

If at least one parent of pupils belonging to cultural minorities has had schooling equal to or below the level of lower secondary education, or if the parent with the highest wage is a manual labourer, the pupil is assigned the additional weight of 0.9 in determining the staff size of the school through a complex formula. Pupils not belonging to cultural minorities whose parents both have a low level of education are assigned the additional weight of 0.25. Pupils at boarding schools and bargee's children and pupils whose parents live a nomadic life are assigned the additional weight of 0.4 and 0.7, respectively. The remaining pupils are 0.00 pupils. In 2001, there were 202,500 0.90 pupils, 213,700 0.25 pupils, 1,100 0.40 pupils, 3,400 0.70 pupils, and 1,131,600 0.00 pupils (Ministerie van OCW 2002).

Since 1997, municipalities are fully in charge of the policy to combat "those negative effects on the learning and developmental opportunities

of students that are the result of social, economic and cultural circumstances” (Staatsblad 1997a). Municipalities are required to develop a plan for local educational compensatory policy, in cooperation with schools, within a *Landelijk Beleidskader Gemeentelijk Onderwijsachterstandenbeleid (LBK-GOA*, i.e., national policy framework for municipal educational compensatory policy), which must be renewed every four years. The *LBK-GOA* describes the national objectives of compensatory policy and the ways in which this policy is evaluated. Local *GOA* plans describe how these objectives are operationalised, how the resources allocated to the municipality and additional staff allocated to schools are employed, and how monitoring takes place.

In the *LBK-GOA* spanning the years 1998-2002 (Staatsblad 1997b), objectives were defined with respect to pre- and early school education, the Dutch language, special education, drop-outs, equal participation in education, and the monitoring of local developments. The objectives for the Dutch language pertained to the development of local policies in which attention would be paid to joint primary reception, the tuning of primary reception, and the follow-up activities related to the teaching of DL2. The remaining objectives dealt with regular instruction in the Dutch language, encouragement of the use of extracurricular programmes aimed at the improvement of Dutch language proficiency, professionalisation of teachers, and improvement of the mothers’ proficiency in Dutch.

In addition to the *LBK-GOA 1998-2002*, a policy on educational opportunities was launched in 2000 in *Aan de slag met onderwijskansen* (get going with educational opportunities). According to this paper, the primary objective of the “policy on educational opportunities” is “the optimal development of all talents of pupils” (Kamerstukken 2000a:9). The paper initiated the development of tailor-made school plans for “schools with educational opportunities”, i.e., primary schools with at least 70 per cent “disadvantaged” pupils. It called for combining the competences of educational support centres and the Inspectorate of Education for developing these school plans. With respect to Dutch language proficiency, the paper reads:

“The policy on educational opportunities reinforces the approach to language in provisions across the curriculum, from pre-school education to the transition to the labour market. It is about the implementation of available knowledge, instruments, and methods in the institutions. In their school development plan, the educational opportunity schools will

elaborate on an approach to language, in particular the approach to children from disadvantaged groups, and determine the results to be obtained. The approach to language should compensate for the special needs of pupils speaking other languages, and extend over the Dutch language in lessons in subjects other than Dutch.” (p.15-16)

Concrete measures announced in the plan include the possibility for ‘opportunity schools’ to have modern language arts textbooks at their disposal, the development of prototypical programmes for emergent literacy, vocabulary, and oral communication in order to professionalise teachers in the field of DL2, the development of a specific approach to language for schools in small municipalities, and the compilation of a ‘consumer’s guide’ to language textbooks and good practices.

In 1998, municipalities became responsible for the planning of *Onderwijs in Allochtone Levende Talen* (minority language teaching) or *OALT* as well. The regulation that came into force in that year allowed municipalities to organise minority language teaching either as a curricular provision supporting the learning of the regular curriculum, or, in the lower years only, as an extracurricular provision aimed at the teaching of a minority language:

“The city council can, after immigrant minority parents have been enabled to communicate their opinion on that [...], allot the resources [...] for instruction in non-indigenous, living languages completely or partly to language support of immigrant minority pupils in the first four school years [...].” (Staatsblad 1998)

The possibility of using means allotted for *OALT* for ‘language support’, as it became known, was said to have been created to do justice to the different wishes of the different groups of parents who, according to the Act, were to be involved in the decision-making process (Kamerstukken 1997). The concept of language support, however, was not defined in the 1998 *OALT* Act. The explanatory memorandum attached to the bill merely indicated that, in the case of language support, the *OALT* teacher

“supports the form teacher’s teaching via the mother tongue of the immigrant minority pupil. This supportive function can be employed within the regular curriculum and can be regarded as an instrument in the framework of educational compensatory policy.” (Kamerstukken 1997:3)

Thus, the distribution of time over years and subjects, the attuning to the regular class (preteaching, reteaching), and the location (inside or outside the regular classroom) of language support were not prescribed by the

Act. It was left to the schools to determine how to shape this educational model within this legal framework (Kamerstukken 2000b:2).



## Chapter 3

### The school, the teachers, and the pupils

*De Rietschans* primary school is located in a multicultural neighbourhood of a medium-sized city of approximately 160,000 inhabitants in the south of the Netherlands. According to municipal information, 29 per cent of the inhabitants of the areas served by the school, the districts of Rietveld and De Schans, are of non-Dutch origin. The high-rise and low-rise flats, and the terraced and drive-in houses in these districts were built in the sixties. The majority of the houses are council housing. The local average disposable income is 20 per cent below the average of the city. The two-storeyed school building is surrounded by a street, a patch of grass, a sports centre, and a home for the elderly. Close to the school is a community centre and some shops, such as the Turkish *Market*. The school originated ten years ago from an amalgamation of a monocultural school in Rietveld and a multicultural school in De Schans. The existence of both schools was endangered by the decreasing numbers of pupils. In 1999, almost 40 per cent of the 219 pupils spoke a language at home other than Dutch. At home, 18 per cent of the pupils spoke Turkish, and 14 per cent spoke Berber and/or Moroccan-Arabic. Well over 90 per cent of the pupils, 48 per cent of the mothers, and 51 per cent of the fathers were born in the Netherlands, which implies that by far the most pupils had started their educational career in the Netherlands.

At the time of the study, the staff consisted of fourteen form teachers, two minority language teachers, a remedial teacher/internal coordinator pupil care, a head teacher, a teacher of DL2, and two teacher assistants. The multicultural character of the school was acknowledged in official documents such as the School Guide and the School Plan, in which the school was conceived as “a multicultural society in a miniature”. Or, as the head teacher explained,

“Here you live in collaboration, [...] in a community where all cultures live together, where you strongly call on respect for each other.” (Jan:13)

Pupils were not allowed to speak languages other than Dutch, as excluding those who do not speak that language was considered impolite, while talking Dutch was believed to imply learning Dutch. The head teacher further argued that “for every pupil, the Dutch language is in-

dispensable. Every pupil. Irrespective of his descent” (Jan:8). Although the reason why Dutch is indispensable was not given, it seems that a command of the national standard language was believed to be a prerequisite for improving the social-economic position of ethnic minorities. The school also participated in local initiatives taken to teach Dutch to the pupils’ mothers.

The 1999 School Guide devoted a separate section to “immigrant minority pupils and bilingual education”. This entailed “bilingual education” for Turkish and Moroccan pupils in the lower years, i.e., DL2 classes for all pupils who have not reached certain norms for receptive vocabulary, and ‘language-support’ classes in Turkish and Moroccan-Arabic to learn and understand the Dutch language via these languages. In the third and fourth grade, bilingual education was said to centre around Dutch vocabulary, while in the pre-school year and in the first and second year, it was supposed to be tailored to the early intervention programme *Piramide* (Van Kuyk 2000), which *de Rietschans* adopted as well.

In the main data collection period, the fourth grade of *de Rietschans* had 25 pupils, of whom 14 said that Dutch was their sole home language. The other pupils spoke Turkish (7 pupils), or Moroccan-Arabic and/or Berber (4 pupils) at home apart from, or instead of, Dutch. None of the pupils had been educated before in another country. More than 60 per cent of the pupils, including all multilingual pupils, had parents with a low level of education, which implies that they were assigned the additional weight of 0.25 or 0.90 in determining the staff size of the school. The school monitored the pupils’ progress by regularly administering language and mathematics tests. These standard tests had been developed by the National Institute for Educational Measurement, *Cito*. The average age of the pupils was seven years. Ed, the form teacher, was born in 1940 and had worked at the monocultural predecessor of *de Rietschans* for 26 years before the amalgamation in 1990. Nanda, who was born in 1958, had worked at *de Rietschans* as a DL2 teacher since 1997. Fatima was born in 1965 and had worked at *de Rietschans* as a minority language teacher since 1994. Figure 2.1 shows the official time schedule of the fourth grade.

<i>Monday</i>			
08.30 - 09.45	Mathematics	13.00 - 14.00	Language activities
09.45 - 10.00	Language activities	14.00 - 14.30	Geography
10.00 - 10.15	Break	14.30 - 15.00	Handwriting
10.15 - 11.15	Independent work		
11.15 - 11.45	Music		
<i>Tuesday</i>			
08.30 - 09.30	Physical education	13.00 - 14.00	Mathematics
09.30 - 10.00	History	14.00 - 15.00	Handcraft
10.00 - 10.15	Break		
10.15 - 11.45	Language activities		
<i>Wednesday</i>			
08.30 - 10.00	Mathematics		
10.10 - 10.15	Break		
10.15 - 11.45	Language activities		
<i>Thursday</i>			
08.30 - 09.30	Mathematics	13.00 - 14.00	Language activities
09.30 - 10.00	Language activities	14.00 - 14.30	Biology
10.10 - 10.15	Break	14.30 - 15.00	Handwriting
10.15 - 11.15	Independent work		
11.15 - 11.45	Religious education		
<i>Friday</i>			
08.30 - 09.30	Mathematics	13.00 - 13.45	Language activities
09.30 - 10.00	Language activities	13.45 - 14.00	Traffic
10.00 - 10.15	Break	14.00 - 15.00	Drawing
10.15 - 11.00	Language activities		
11.00 - 11.45	Physical education		

Figure 2.1: Time schedule of the fourth grade of *de Rietschans*

In practice, the official time schedule, which describes the regular curriculum taught by the form teacher, was only loosely followed. The form teacher devoted well over two-thirds of the available time to language and mathematics, thus cutting down on time officially allocated to other subjects.

The Turkish and Moroccan pupils withdrew from this classroom four times a week for 30 minutes to attend DL2 and language-support classes. These classes were run by different teachers. One Moroccan girl did not participate in DL2, even though the vocabulary test administered by the school indicated that her receptive lexical knowledge was below the standard the school adopted from a language arts textbook. The pupils participating in DL2 were grouped in a 'strong' and a 'weak' class. The Moroccan-Arabic class was accommodated in a corner of the gym, whereas separate classrooms were available for Turkish language support and DL2. Unlike language support, the DL2 arrangement of *de Riet-*



*schans* was not suggested in a national or local policy on DL2. The educational compensatory policies, in which DL2 was embedded, merely facilitated the employment of additional staff if a school was attended by pupils from low socio-economic and immigrant minority backgrounds.

## Chapter 4

### Vocabulary teaching

#### 4.1 Introduction

In the course of the last decade, the teaching of Dutch vocabulary has, at least at a rhetorical level, become a focus of attention in the field of primary education in the Netherlands. It appears that this development was stimulated by studies indicating that at all stages of primary school, immigrant minority pupils have a significantly smaller Dutch vocabulary than native Dutch pupils (Verhoeven & Vermeer 1989; Tesser, Van Dugteren & Merens 1996; Droop 1999; Strating-Keurentjes 2000). Apart from these quantitative differences, which were manifest in the vocabulary test scores of the fourth graders of *de Rietschans* as well, research has shown that the quality of immigrant minority pupils' lexical knowledge of Dutch is also more restricted. That is, they tend to mention fewer aspects of the meaning of, and associations with, words, draw more syntagmatic relations with other words than paradigmatic relations, and have more difficulty defining words formally (Verhallen 1994; Strating-Keurentjes 2000). As Dutch vocabulary is a decisive factor in gaining access to classroom interaction and teaching materials, these restrictions have detrimental effects on the overall school performance of immigrant minority pupils.

Several linguists have called for systematic attention to vocabulary in classes with second language learners (Appel & Vermeer 1994; Appel & Verhallen 1998). Contemporary Dutch handbooks for teachers emphasise the importance of paying systematic attention to the lexical development of (immigrant minority) pupils at school, preferably from the day they enter playgroups and day-care institutes. The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy made the same case (WRR 2001). Repetitive treatment of functionally relevant word meanings by successively establishing a meaningful context, making explicit the meaning of the word, practising the word, and checking retention is claimed to be the appropriate didactic model for effective vocabulary instruction (Verhallen & Verhallen 1994; Appel, Kuiken & Vermeer 1995).

The language arts textbook *Zin in taal-Taal* (Kouwenberg *et al.* 1997a, b, c, d), which was published in 1997, is one of the first textbooks intended for regular classes in which vocabulary is treated as a distinctive aspect of language proficiency to which a separate lesson is devoted every week. It consists of a textbook, a work book, some additional materials, tests, and a teacher's guide, as well as the additional textbook, *Taalmaatje*, and the related teacher's guide. According to the authors, the programme is targeted at both monolingual and bilingual pupils:

"Many immigrant minority pupils are bilingual. They speak both Dutch and the language spoken at home. Some native Dutch pupils are bilingual as well, like in Friesland. *Zin in taal-Taal* takes into account the language backgrounds of native and non-native Dutch children. The method assumes that the immigrant children have taken part in education in Dutch from infancy." (Kouwenberg *et al.* 1997b:6)

Thus, it is taken into account that pupils with different language backgrounds are grouped together in the same classroom to be taught Dutch. There are no separate materials for non-native Dutch pupils. The authors of the programme adhere to a "communicative approach" in that the functions of language are given priority over the structure of the language system. Therefore, the programme focuses on practising the generic skills of speaking, listening, and writing composition in meaningful contexts. At the same time, it is argued that the differential language backgrounds of the target group necessitate instruction in specific skills, i.e., aspects of the language system, as well (Van de Guchte & Kouwenberg 2002:8). Hence, the textbook is structured to include speaking and listening (30 lessons), vocabulary (30 lessons), word construction (40 lessons), sentence construction (30 lessons), and writing (i.e., composing: 20 lessons).

The programme consists of units of fifteen lessons, each of which is centred on a certain theme. For each school day, there is one lesson to be treated in approximately 40 minutes. The lessons include the phases of joint instruction, pupils working independently on assignments, and joint discussion of the assignments. In addition to these lessons from the basic textbook, lessons can be taken from *Taalmaatje* to differentiate between fast and slow learners. Most of these additional lessons deal with vocabulary for slower learners. In the fourth grade of *de Rietschans*, one lesson a day is usually given, more or less according to the script suggested in the teacher's guide, which offers detailed instructions for each lesson. As this was the first time that Ed taught using *Zin in taal-*

*Taal*, he took one to one-and-a-half hours per day to prepare these lessons (Ed 1:22).

School practitioners have started to acknowledge the importance of vocabulary instruction. Tesser & Iedema (2001:100) contend that, at multicultural schools, vocabulary has become “a more explicit part of the curriculum” and a domain in which the pupils’ achievements are monitored more intensively than at schools with monolingual pupil populations. However, teachers are inclined to treat word meanings on a *ad hoc* basis in the context of other learning objectives (Verhallen 1991), whereas retention of word meanings hinges on the extent to which repetitive, explicit instruction is offered. Efforts made to put this principle into practice have, nonetheless, on average, resulted in retention of no more than 30 per cent of the words offered (Appel & Vermeer 1997).

The focus on vocabulary is also manifest in the school policy of *de Rietschans*. The school has implemented the vocabulary-oriented and interrelated language arts textbooks *Zin in taal-Taal* and *Taalmaatje*. The withdrawal classes for minority language teaching and DL2 teaching are, in the lower years, completely devoted to Dutch vocabulary. In addition, the form teachers draw up lists of words occurring in the textbook to which they intend to pay special attention. In this section, the vocabulary teaching and learning practices in the regular and withdrawal classes are discussed. Firstly, it shows how the form teacher deals with Dutch vocabulary teaching on the basis of a self-made word list. Secondly, it shows how Turkish is used in a ‘language-support class’ to teach Dutch vocabulary on the basis of the textbook *Taalmaatje*. Thirdly, the way in which the DL2 teacher puts these vocabulary lessons from the textbook into practice is illustrated.

## 4.2 Vocabulary in the regular class

On several occasions, form teacher Ed expressed his concern about the pupils’ limited vocabulary in Dutch (Ed 3:4; Ed 1:44). Apart from the outcomes of the national vocabulary test administered by the school, which were also “very disappointing”, he observes this in everyday practice. In an interview, he explained that “in particular with foreigners, this vocabulary is of course even more important”. Hence, that is something “we work hard on”. He also referred to an article that appeared in a

local newspaper in which vocabulary was presented as the “Achilles heel” of immigrant minority pupils. A limited vocabulary, it was argued, “often no more than half of what is necessary”, is closely related to reading comprehension.

Apart from spontaneously discussing the meaning of words encountered in books or used by himself, Ed works on vocabulary in several systematic ways. Firstly, he treats the vocabulary lessons from the language arts textbook *Zin in taal-Taal*, which devotes three lessons per unit of fifteen lessons to vocabulary. Secondly, he has the pupils make additional vocabulary exercises stemming from another textbook as a voluntary homework assignment. Thirdly, he made a list of definitions of words occurring in *Taalmaatje*, the textbook which is mainly devoted to vocabulary lessons and used in the DL2 and Turkish and Moroccan-Arabic language-support classes.

In the word list made by Ed and given to the pupils as a handout, the pupils encounter definitions such as those in Figure 2.2.

To peep:	watch on the sly;
The wallpaper:	nice paper for on the wall;
To lick:	go over something with your tongue;
The apron:	a kind of coat to keep your clothes clean;
To clamber:	to climb;
The balcony:	a piece of the house that sticks out with a little fence.

Figure 2.2: Excerpt from Ed's word list

Ed explained that he defined the words so that they would be comprehensible to children. These words are dealt with in Episode 2.1. Ed first has eight word definitions be read aloud by two pupils. Ed also reads aloud the definitions and elaborates on only some of them. Then the pupils have the opportunity to “look at” the definitions for a while. They know they can come to the front a little later to demonstrate their word knowledge. After less than a minute of having studied the words individually, Dennis volunteers to come to the front. His classmates ask him about the meaning of words they pick out from the word list. After a while, when the words from Lessons 1-4 on the handout are also included (which had been dealt with before), Aysegül is nominated to come to the front. She is a Turkish girl who is repeating the fourth grade. Aysegül's score on the standard vocabulary test administered by the school is significantly below the national average. In a written report, Ed

described her as “a nice pupil whose language proficiency is weak”. At home, she usually speaks Turkish with her parents.

Episode 2.1: That's not the way we explain that

- Stéfanie: Aysegül.  
*Aysegül.*
- Teacher: Yes! Where are the fingers?  
*Ja! Waar zijn de vingers?*
- Aysegül: Wendy.  
*Wendy.*
- Teacher: And check it immediately, right?  
*En gelijk controleren hè.*
- Wendy: To lick.  
*Likken.*
- Aysegül: To lick. If you have a lolly then you lick.  
*Likken. Als je een lolly hebt dan lik je.*
- Teacher: O no but that's not the way we explain that.  
*O nee maar zo zeggen we dat niet uit.*
- Aysegül: Then you have a lo.  
*Dan heb je een lo.*
- Teacher: You have to tell what to lick means.  
*Jij moet vertellen wat likken betekent.*
- Aysegül: Then you lick something.  
*Dan lik je iets.*
- Teacher: Yes, then you lick something indeed (dissatisfied voice).  
*Ja, dan lik je iets ja.*
- Pupil: But what?  
*Maar wat?*
- Aysegül: Candy.  
*Snoep.*
- Teacher: But what if somebody doesn't know what to lick is.  
*Maar als er iemand nou niet weet wat likken is.*
- Pupil: I know what to lick means.  
*Ik weet wat likken betekent.*
- Teacher: And then you say to that person, then you lick something.  
Would he already know it then?  
*En dan zeg jij tegen die persoon: dan lik je iets. Zou die 't dan al weten?*
- Aysegül: No.  
*Nee.*

- Teacher: No, because he just doesn't know it.  
*Nee want hij weet het juist niet.*
- Aysegül: Then you lick lollies.  
*Dan lik je lolly's.*
- Teacher: Yes but he doesn't know what to lick means.  
*Ja maar hij weet niet wat likken betekent.*
- Pupils: Oh!  
*O!*
- Teacher: So then you have to tell him that. Now what happens if somebody licks?  
*Dus dan moet jij 'm dat vertellen. Wat gebeurt er nou als iemand likt?*
- Pupil: Go over it with your tongue (whispering).  
*Met je tong er overheen gaan.*
- Aysegül: That your tongue goes over.  
*Dat je tong over gaat.*
- Teacher: Precisely.  
*Juist.*
- Bouchra: She said that. Feride told her that.  
*Dat heb zij gezegd. Dat heeft Feride voorgezegd.*
- Teacher: O who do I hear? No I needn't hear anybody.  
*O wie hoor ik allemaal? Nee ik hoef niemand te horen.*
- Aysegül: Bahar.  
*Bahar.*
- Bahar: The balcony.  
*Het balkon.*
- Aysegül: The balcony er is this stone. Round is this stone. Have you over this fence.  
*Het balkon uh is zo'n steen. Rond is zo'n steen. Heb je overheen zo'n hekje.*
- Teacher: You go take a good look at all the words here again. Because you all know it a little bit, but not yet as we actually want it. I need to have one more girl. Watch carefully, read carefully, Aysegül. And know it precisely. Because if somebody says, what is to lick and you say, that's to lick then we still don't know a thing of course, do we? Well, Wendy.  
*Ga jij nog es hier alle woordjes goed bekijken. Want je weet het allemaal wel een beetje goed, maar toch nog niet zo als wij het eigenlijk willen. Ik moest nog één meisje hebben. Goed kijken, goed lezen Aysegül. En precies weten. Want als iemand*

*zegt: wat is likken en jij zegt: da's likken, dan weten we nog niks natuurlijk hè. Nou, Wendy.*

In this episode, Aysegül is confronted with the task of describing words mentioned by her classmates and defined on a handout from the teacher. Apart from the answer whispered by one of her classmates, she did not follow these definitions in either of her descriptions of 'to lick' and 'balcony'. She describes these words as follows:

- If you have a lolly then you lick.
- Then you have a lo.
- Then you lick something.
- Candy.
- Then you lick lollies.
- That your tongue goes over.
- The balcony is this stone. Round is this stone. Have you over this fence.

The association with lollies indicates that Aysegül was aware of at least one everyday context in which people lick. That is, she knew, to a certain extent, what 'to lick' means. Still, Ed is not satisfied.

Thus, descriptions signalling a certain level of understanding of the meaning of the word did not suffice. The actual norm the pupils were expected to meet was made explicit as soon as Aysegül had given her first explanation. Her description was turned down as "that's not the way we explain that". In retrospect, Ed explained that

- "You have to tell it in a different way." (Ed 3:3)
- "But so I want them not to use that word to lick." (Ed 4:7)
- "I also want her [i.e., Aysegül, JB] to learn to tell it. That's also Dutch, right. That she can express herself in such a way that somebody understands what a balcony is." (Ed 4:8)
- "I never want to hear the same word again, right." (Ed 4:15)
- "To lick is something with your tongue. That's what I want to hear." (Ed 4:16)

In the episode, Ed tried to explain this norm to Aysegül by referring to an imaginative interlocutor who does not know what to lick means. The target word should be explained such that this interlocutor is able to achieve understanding on the basis of the explanation given. What this norm exactly entails can be inferred from the other instances from the vocabulary lesson in which pupils used explanations with which Ed did



not fully agree. This inventory suggests that the pupils' explanations were disconfirmed or only partially confirmed by the teacher if the teacher believed that they did not denote the object or act (to clamber is to make sound, to beckon is to make sound), if he believed a crucial distinctive feature was omitted (a frying pan is low, growling implies a low sound), if the definition pointed to non-standard, yet common applications of the object (squeezing out screws with pincers, screwing with a drill), or if the superordinate was omitted (a shoe box is a box).

It thus seems that "how *we* actually want it", as Ed puts it, implies a lexicographic definition that is generic or abstract rather than exemplary or concrete, paradigmatic rather than syntagmatic, formal rather than informal, and context-independent rather than context-bound. In most cases, it was the teacher who assessed whether these criteria were met, despite the teacher's call at the beginning of the lesson to immediately check the testee's replies. The only case in which the pupils did express disagreement with the description given by a classmate seemed to be related to the content rather than the definitional form of the testee's explanation (to beckon is to make a sound).

These definitional norms were not spelled out at any point during the lesson. It was taken for granted that the pupils knew that explaining the meanings of words in the classroom differs from clarification of meaning in everyday conversations. It was also taken for granted that the pupils share this tacit knowledge of what counts as a legitimate explanation of word meanings. The definitional task not only requires productive lexical knowledge rather than the receptive knowledge implied by the aim of the lesson, but also socio- and meta-linguistic skills. As Snow *et al.* (1991: 104) point out,

"to provide a formal definition, children must first analyse the task situation in which they find themselves, decide that a formal definition is required, and recall the form peculiar to this particular genre; then they must reflect on the meaning of a target word, analyse what they know about that word in order to decide what is central to its meaning, and to organise that crucial information into the standard form for the definitional genre."

When pupils are able to learn the definitions on the handout by heart before they find themselves in front of the class, definitional skills are not called upon in accomplishing the task. Arguably, retention of the definitions benefits from the lexical knowledge the child already possesses.

Aysegül, however, did not recall the definitions from the handout. The explanations she came up with did not seem to have been inspired by the definitions on the handout. Her relatively limited Dutch vocabulary made the task of quickly learning the definitions by heart difficult to accomplish. The alternative, i.e., devising the explanations herself, constituted a difficult task as well: not only because of the lexical knowledge required, but also because of the additional meta-linguistic skills involved. Aysegül, being unaware of the teacher's definitional norms, talked about licking in a context-dependent, yet socially shared manner. While licking a lolly can be thought of a socially shared association, her description of a balcony appeared to refer to the experience of viewing a picture in the additional language arts textbook *Taalmaatje*, which she only shared with the classmates who participated in withdrawal classes.

Hagtvet (1992), who examined the definitions given by two- to six-year-old mother tongue learners of Norwegian, categorised pupils' talking about referents in a context-dependent, yet socially shared manner as the second stage in the acquisition of definitional skills, whereby children move away from idiosyncratic towards conventional definitions which reflect hierarchically organised semantic associative networks. Merely four per cent of the definitions produced by Hagtvet's six-year-old informants could be categorised as conventional definitions. More than 25 per cent of the definitions of the six-year-olds were akin to Aysegül's in that the definitional task appeared to

"evoke some concrete situational images or feature(s) that the child associated with the word, but these were rather peripheral to those which the adult culture considers the most essential characteristics of the word." (Hagtvet 1992:304)

The teacher was aware of the fact that the task of defining words is linguistically demanding (Ed 4:8). He motivates his methodology as follows.

"Actually I find with those work books, they offer that once, they can colour a bit, and then it stops again. But there is no programme, hardly any programme which practises with words. You have to practise those words a little while every day, even if it is just ten minutes. And tomorrow again, and tomorrow again. Far too soon it is assumed, if they have heard it, that they then know what it is. Or if they have seen it. Yes, it is of course even better if you can show something, but it has to be memorised, right. Automatised. That's it." (Ed 4:2)

Thus, Ed rejects playful vocabulary exercises and underscores the necessity of repetition over time. This holds even more so for immigrant minority pupils whose vocabulary is “way too small”. Eventually, he believes, word meanings should be learned by repeatedly confronting pupils with definitions in which those meanings are made explicit verbally. In reflecting on the regular practice of treating the word definition list, he argues that

“That child asks that child: what does that mean? And through that interplay I hope that that child already learns that. In fact, they all participate, because everyone likes to ask that word to the one who’s in front of the class. And if they do that for five minutes, then they also know those words partly. And that’s what we do another few times like that.” (Ed 1:45)

In practice, this ‘interplay’ boils down to question-and-answer exchanges between pairs of pupils, with the teacher being in control of the interaction and the only one authorised to evaluate the answers on the basis of certain linguistic norms. Hence, the pupils’ active participation in this teacher-led, whole-class activity is rather limited. From the teacher’s perspective, however, this is a more efficient way of teaching, or at least a necessary addition to the vocabulary lessons in the textbook. In view of the limited vocabulary of immigrant minority pupils, he seems to argue, it is all the more important to opt for such a methodology. That is, when it comes to vocabulary, he is pro-active in responding to multilingualism, be it in a manner which deviates from the didactics currently propagated by educationalists, linguists, and the textbooks he uses.

### 4.3 Vocabulary teaching in the Dutch as a second language class

The words which were discussed in the regular class in Episode 2.1 stem from the textbook *Taalmaatje*, which is used in the DL2 and Turkish and Moroccan-Arabic language-support classes. Each lesson in this textbook has its own theme. Most of the assignments are receptive in nature and aimed at the acquisition of new meanings of words (Kouwenberg *et al.* 1997d). They vary from categorising words and finding synonyms to constructing sentences from given phrases matching certain pictures. The treatment of the successive lessons is said to be built up according to a tripartite model. Firstly, the topic of the lesson is explored by focusing

on the title and the pictures, thus activating the knowledge the pupils already have. Secondly, the meaning of the target words is clarified in various ways, e.g. by pinpointing, acting out, or explaining in simpler words. Thirdly, some oral exercises are made for the benefit of consolidation. In *Taalmaatje*, many illustrations are depicted to support the understanding of word meanings.

Observations of the DL2 lessons given to the fourth graders by Nanda revealed that these lessons usually entail four or five stages. In the first stage, the teacher asks the pupils to explain the meanings of the target words from the previous lesson. In the second stage, she introduces the topic of the lesson and has the children talk about this topic. In the third stage, she draws attention to the pictures in the textbook and has the pupils tell what they see in the pictures. In the fourth stage, she treats the exercises included in the lesson and asks the pupils to explain what the words in the exercises mean. In this stage, the teacher explains word meanings in different ways, including describing, acting out, pointing to objects she brings along, and giving examples. In the fifth stage, which is entered only when there is time left, she has the pupils cover parts of the exercises with a card so that they have to find the right words without relying on the clues given by the book. At all stages except for the fifth, the pupils are encouraged to talk and they actually do so. This practice not only corresponds with the didactics proposed in the teacher's guide, but also with the teacher's belief that "Vocabulary is, after all, letting the pupils talk" (Nanda:11). All conversations in the DL2 classroom are conducted in Dutch. As in the regular classroom, pupils are not allowed to, and do not, speak a language other than Dutch.

Episode 2.2 contains a lengthy excerpt from a DL2 lesson that illustrates the talks to which the teacher referred in the interview. The lesson is about a secret hut in a forest. The objects in the picture are numbered and the names of the characters are mentioned in the drawing. The drawing is accompanied by an introductory text and two exercises. In Exercise 1, the pupils find out where the children depicted in the book are, what they are doing, and what they have. The first question can be answered by linking together the linguistic units of a subject and a verb, on the one hand, and a prepositional adjunct, on the other. The second question can be answered by linking subjects with verb phrases. The numbers given to the adjuncts and the verb phrases correspond to the numbers in the drawing denoting places and acts, respectively.

The teacher's guide indicates that it is the aim of this lesson to have the pupils expand their vocabulary with words related to the topic of secrets and other words. The target words mentioned include the barbed wire, the hammock, the oak, the sand track, the watchtower, the blackberry, the brook, to blow, to spy, to hide oneself, to dig, and the pitfall. It is suggested that the teacher let the pupils first respond to the title of the lesson and the pictures by asking questions such as, "Have you ever made a secret hut yourselves?" Then, the teacher should read the introductory text aloud. As regards the first exercise, it is suggested that the teacher "treat the meanings of the target words by describing what they are" (Kouwenberg *et al.* 1997d:97) once the pupils have completed the sentences. Then questions can be asked such as "Who is in the hammock?", "Where is Frank?", and "It is made of iron and has sharp points. What is it?". The second part of the exercise may also involve acting things out.

Aziza, Müberra, Ruhan, Nasira, Bétul, and Arzu are engaged in the episode. Nanda told them that the story was about a secret hut and asked what that might be. Aziza replied that nobody may see or know about the hut, which was confirmed by Nanda. She then asked who had ever had a secret hut. Except for Aziza, all the children then talked about their own experiences with secret places, while Nanda controlled the turn-taking and asked questions related to the stories the pupils told. Then the teacher focussed attention on the picture in the textbook, asking the pupils to point at one of the children from the picture and to tell what the children were doing or where they were, without looking at the parts of the sentences given in the assignments. However, from remarks such as "You don't need to look up anything", it seems that Nanda had the impression that the pupils did use these clues in answering her questions. In fact, most of the pupils' answers were similar to the sentences to be made in the assignments, using phrases like 'in the hammock', 'watches with binoculars', 'behind a blackberry', and 'near the brook'.

Nadie was the last character in the drawing about whom the pupils were asked to say something in their own words before Nanda turned to the phrases given in the book. Unlike the previous discussions on what the children in the book were doing and where they were, the teacher asked for an explanation of a target word in this stage of the lesson.

## Episode 2.2: Let the pupils talk

- Teacher: And Nadie still. Nadie was that little child.  
*En Nadie nog. Nadie was dat kleine kindje.*
- Ruhan: Nadie. Nadie is under the barb.  
*Nadie. Nadie ligt onder de prikkel.*
- Teacher: Yes.  
*Ja.*
- Arzu: Wire.  
*Draad.*
- Teacher: That's what we call barbed wire, right.  
*Dat noemen we prikkeldraad hè.*
- Arzu: I know.  
*Ik weet.*
- Teacher: Who can explain what that is, barbed wire?  
*Wie kan uitleggen wat dat is, prikkeldraad?*
- Arzu: Well that's an iron wire that has all those barbs on it.  
*Nou dat is een ijzeren draad dat allemaal van prikkels aan zit.*
- Teacher: Why is there sometimes barbed wire somewhere?  
*Waarom is er wel 's ergens prikkeldraad?*
- Arzu: For example there is a shop, a kind of shop, there it's full with gold, there they then have around it.  
*Bijvoorbeeld er is een winkel, een soort winkel, daar vol met goud zit, daar hebben ze dan rond omheen.*
- Teacher: Did you ever see that in a shop, barbed wire?  
*Heb jij dat wel 's in een winkel gezien, prikkeldraad?*
- Arzu: No, but kind of. I don't know either what.  
*Nee, maar soort. Ik weet ook niet wat.*
- Teacher: Usually I see it outside near the pasture (laughing).  
*Meestal zie ik het buiten bij de wei.*
- Müberra: Yeah, then you may not go there.  
*Ja, dan mag je daar niet heen.*
- Teacher: But you mean something, what did you say, if there's something made of gold? Yes then they sometimes make something around it so that you can't reach it. You're right in that.  
*Maar jij bedoelt iets, wat zei jij, als er iets van goud is? Ja dan maken ze d'r wel iets omheen dat je d'r niet bij kunt. Daar heb jij gelijk in.*
- Müberra: That you don't x.  
*Dat je niet aan x.*

- Teacher: Yes, but I don't think that is barbed wire.  
*Ja maar dat is denk ik geen prikkeldraad.*
- Aziza: No (laughing).  
*No.*
- Teacher: Barbed wire is usually outside near the cows.  
*Prikkeldraad is meestal buiten bij de koeien.*
- Arzu: I think so too.  
*Ik denk het ook wel.*
- Teacher: Yeah, I think so too.  
*Ja, ik denk het ook wel.*
- Müberra: Are the cows not allowed to go outside.  
*Mogen de koeien niet naar buiten.*
- Teacher: And why would they have barbed wire?  
*En waarom zouden ze prikkeldraad hebben?*

At this point, one of Nanda's colleagues entered the room and asked Nanda a question. When this teacher left, the discussion continued.

- Teacher: Okay, we were talking about barbed wire. So barbed wire is what you see outside in the pasture. Why would there be barbed wire outside?  
*Okay, wij hadden het over prikkeldraad. Prikkeldraad zie je dus buiten in de wei. Waarom zou d'r buiten prikkeldraad zijn?*
- Ruhan: Well otherwise if the animals go away, then they cannot go away, and then they go like backwards and then it comes, if it wants to go away then it goes running and then it touches that barb.  
*Nou anders als de dieren weggaan, dan kan ze niet weg, en daarna gaan ze zo naar achteren en daarna komt ie, als die weg wilt dan gaat ie zo rennen en daarna komt ie tegen die prik aan.*
- Teacher: Then it touches the barbed wire, then it has a bit of a fright, because that hurts a little bit, right, and then it goes back.  
*Dan komt ie tegen het prikkeldraad, dan schrikt ie even, want dat doet een beetje zeer, hè, en dan gaat ie terug.*
- Müberra: Doesn't it go anymore.  
*Gaat ie niet meer.*
- Teacher: So then it can't go any further. It knows that then.  
*Dus dan kan ie niet verder. Dat weet ie dan.*

Then Ruhan explained that her mother's arm got burned when Bétul and other children were making noise right in front of their house while her father was trying to sleep. Nanda knew about this and concluded that they should not tease her family. Then, she came back to the barbed wire which they were discussing:

- Teacher: But, place barbed wire in front of the door? I wouldn't think so. Near us they have, near a house, where a lot of children go over the wall to fetch a ball, people have a kind of barbed wire, they have put all these little pins on top of it.  
*Maar, prikkeldraad voor de deur zetten? Denk het niet hè. Bij ons hebben ze, bij een huis, waar heel veel kinderen over de muur gaan om een bal te pakken, hebben de mensen een soort prikkeldraad, die hebben allemaal van die pinnetjes d'r bovenop gezet.*
- Pupil: Can also glass.  
*Kan ook glas.*
- Teacher: Kind of glass. So then the children can't go over the wall anymore. That's also for the same. That you can't go over it. That's what barbed wire is for. And you can tell by looking at Nadie, because Nadie crawls under the barbed wire, and then what happens?  
*Soort glas. Dus dan kunnen de kinderen niet meer over de muur. Da's ook voor hetzelfde. Dat je d'r niet langs kunt. Daarvoor is prikkeldraad. En dat zie je wel aan Nadie, want Nadie kruipt onder het prikkeldraad door, en wat gebeurt er dan?*
- Müberra: For his hands.  
*Voor z'n handen.*
- Teacher: Müberra, what do you see?  
*Müberra, wat zie jij?*
- Müberra: I see er that she grabs the barbed wire like that. And then she goes over.  
*Ik zie uhm dat ze dat prikkeldraad zo pakt. En dan gaat ze over.*
- Teacher: Yeah, but why does she grab the barbed wire?  
*Ja, maar waarom pakt ze het prikkeldraad?*
- Müberra: Because she wants to get over.  
*Omdat ze overheen wilt.*
- Teacher: No, she goes under, but she gets a little bit stuck with her trousers like that. In those barbs. Yes? So she has to undo that.



*Nee, ze gaat er ;onder door, maar ze blijft een heel klein  
beetje zo met d'r broekje d'r aan hangen. Aan die prikkels.  
Ja? Dus die moet ze losmaken.*

Ruhan: Miss, she can also go away at Lisa's side. There still can.  
*Juf, die kan ook bij Lisa zijn kant weg. Daar kan nog.*

Arzu: Miss, miss, I saw barbed wire somewhere.  
*Juffrouw, juf, ik heb ergens prikkeldraad gezien.*

Teacher: Yes?  
*Ja?*

Arzu: Yes, there near Texaco is.  
*Ja daar bij Texaco is.*

Müberra: Yes.  
*Yes.*

Arzu: Also kind of, alongside the trains, and there is that beer and  
there you also have this barbed wire.  
*Ook soort, bij de treinen langs, en daar is dat bier daar heb je  
ook zo prikkeldraad.*

Teacher: Then you may not pass that. They did that on purpose.  
*Dan mag je daar niet langs. Dat hebben ze expres gedaan.*

Arzu: I go up all the time, then I drive downward.  
*Ik ga ik ga steeds naar boven, dan rij ik naar beneden.*

Teacher: As long as you watch out then, right. Because if you fall in the  
barbed wire, everything will be torn.  
*Als je maar uitkijkt dan hè. Want als je in het prikkeldraad  
valt, dan gaat alles kapot hoor.*

Aziza: Miss, it's also, then you have what looks very much like a xx,  
which, but it's not. Because at this other school they had too.  
There is this very big square, all the pupils went throwing dirty  
boxes there. But that wasn't allowed at all. Sometimes  
children if you stood there with them children went climbing  
on, on the fence. And then that wasn't allowed. Then the Sir,  
the Sir of the school also did like things on it that nobody was  
allowed.  
*Juffrouw, het is ook zo, dan heb je die zo heel erg die lijkt op  
een xx, die zo'n, maar het is niet. Omdat daar bij die andere  
school hadden ze ook. Daar zo is heel grote plein, daar gingen  
alle kinderen zo vieze bakjes gooien. Maar dat mocht  
helemaal niet. Soms kinderen als je daar bij staat gingen  
kinderen op klimmen, op de hek. En toen dat mocht niet. Toen  
heeft de meneer, de meester van de school heeft ook zo dingen  
d'r op gedaan dat niemand mocht dat.*

- Bétul: Barbed wire.  
*Prikkeldraad.*
- Teacher: Yes. Barbed wire, or something with little points so that you can't climb over it.  
*Ja. Prikkeldraad, of iets met puntjes dat je d'r niet over kunt klimmen.*
- Arzu: Near us near playground is also kind of barbed wire. Not barbed wire, they are those x.  
*Bij ons bij schoolplein is ook soort een prikkeldraad. Geen prikkeldraad, dat zijn van die x.*
- Teacher: No, that's a fence with very little points on it, right.  
*Nee, da's een hek met hele kleine puntjes erop hè.*
- Aziza: But of the other was these big points.  
*Maar van die ander was zo grote puntjes.*
- Teacher: Yes?  
*Ja?*
- Aziza: Yes because nobody could climb over.  
*Ja omdat niemand kon over klimmen.*
- Teacher: Then nobody can go over it. Okay, Let's look at the sentences.  
*Dan kan er niemand over hè. Okay, wij gaan naar de zinnen kijken.*

Following this, the pupils constructed sentences with the phrases given in the book. Every time a sentence had been made, the teacher asked what the target word from that sentence meant. This often led to extended negotiations to which the pupils again contributed with concrete examples from their own experiences. When they came across the word 'barbed wire' again, the teacher did not ask them to clarify the word. When Bétul had given the sentence 'Nadie is under the barbed wire', she simply commented that they now knew what that was and encouraged Bétul to make the other sentence with 'Nadie', i.e., 'Nadie pulls loose her trousers'. Once all the exercises were done, the pupils each chose a sticker from Nanda's collection and returned to the regular classroom next door.

In this episode, the pupils and the teacher are engaged in a teacher-led negotiation of meaning. Unlike naturally occurring, unplanned negotiations of meaning in the classroom (cf. Gass & Varonis 1994; Van den Branden 1995), this negotiation was not triggered by a problem of understanding encountered by the pupils. Rather, it was the teacher who initiated the negotiation with the deliberate aim of achieving a mutual

understanding of the meaning of a pre-selected word. Both the pupils and the teacher contributed to the negotiation. Their contributions centred on different concepts and instances of these concepts in lived experiences. The various objects were described in terms of their intrinsic characteristics, the places where they can be found, the functions they serve, and the effects they have on animals and people.

More specifically, the pupils and the teacher were engaged in a metalinguistic discussion on barbed wire and other sharp materials, such as pins, points, palings, or glass, which are attached to fences or walls to hamper people or animals from climbing over them. In three cases, the contributions dealt with general descriptions of a concept, without referring to a concrete, experienced instance of the concept in real life. Arzu described barbed wire as iron wire with barbs, the teacher described barbed wire as something you find in the pasture, and Müberra described the concept of 'sharp materials to discourage climbing' as something that can be made of glass. In one case, the teacher referred to the story told by the pictures in the textbook. The other contributions dealt with a concrete or imaginable referent in the everyday lives of the pupils and the teacher. These referents included a kind of barbed wire in a shop, pins on a wall close to the teacher's home, a kind of barbed wire near the trains, big pins at the playground of Aziza's former school, and little points on a fence at the playground of *de Rietschans*.

The negotiations were guided by the teacher. Her questions and comments seemed to be driven by three concerns. Firstly, she saw that a generic description of barbed wire was formulated in which the typical location, function, and effect of this material was made explicit. Secondly, she made sure that the pupils did not label objects as barbed wire if she believed that the pupils had a different object in mind. Thirdly, she made sure that the class did not stray away from the textbook for too long. In doing so, she sketched a picture of barbed wire as something which can be found in a pasture, where it prevents cows from walking away. Müberra and Ruhan recognised this picture. Perhaps Arzu recognised this picture as well, yet she contested the view that barbed wire is almost by definition something one finds in the pasture, where it serves to prevent cows from leaving. By referring to a shop with gold, a place close to the railways, and the school playground, she moved away from the picture sketched by the teacher, yet remained close to the concept of barbed wire. In fact, the second time she described a place where she knew there was a "kind of barbed wire", she referred to a

place where there was indeed barbed wire to keep intruders at a distance. At the other two places she described, there may be materials which do not count as barbed wire, yet barbed wire could certainly have been used at these places to discourage intruders. Arzu acknowledged that it was not barbed wire she described, but a “kind of” barbed wire.

The teacher’s picture of where barbed wire can typically be found, and what its function and effect are, touches on a hallmark of the landscape of the Netherlands. In the course of the 20th century, hedgerows and wooden barriers were replaced by barbed wire on a large scale. It is estimated that there are approximately 200,000 kilometres of barbed wire in the Netherlands (De Geus & Van Slobbe 2001), dividing a land with a perimeter of 2,262 kilometres into numerous squared, rural areas. For the teacher, who grew up in a Dutch village, this is what barbed wire stands for. Growing up in an urban area and drawing on everyday experiences, Arzu associated barbed wire with materials attached to places she may not enter (a shop, the railroad) or leave (the playground).

Unlike the vocabulary lessons based on Ed’s list of definitions taught in the regular class, in the DL2 classes, the teacher did not expect the pupils to come up with formal, decontextualised definitions of the target words. Rather, she allowed the pupils to tell – at length – about things they associated with the target word and she related these things to what they believed were essential features of the target word. The result of this was a sequence of negotiations about the target word. The lengthy negotiations suggest that Nanda felt less pressure to ‘get on with it’, i.e., to turn to the next target word or the subject matter as soon as possible. Managing one subject content and six pupils at a time is, obviously, a beneficial precondition for the teacher’s intention to “let the pupils talk”.

What the vocabulary practices in the regular and DL2 classrooms have in common is that, in both cases, it was the teacher who eventually evaluated the legitimacy of the pupils’ contributions to the construction of meaning. In the regular class, the pupils learnt that ‘then you lick a lolly’ is not a legitimate description of ‘to lick’. In the DL2 class, the pupils learnt that barbed wire is what is found in the pasture, not in a place where something valuable is kept. In both classes, the pupils’ knowledge of other languages was counted as irrelevant to the learning objective. In fact, the use of other languages was not allowed at all. In that respect, the teaching of vocabulary in these classes contrasted markedly with the teaching of vocabulary in the minority language classes, as is shown in the next section.

#### 4.4 Vocabulary teaching in the Turkish language-support class

At *de Rietschans*, the language-support class offered the only opportunity for the Turkish pupils to speak Turkish. In this context, Turkish was used as a language of instruction and communication with the aim to learn Dutch. Teacher Fatima usually dealt with the vocabulary lessons from *Taalmaatje* which had been discussed before in the DL2 class. In Episode 2.3, the pupils work on a lesson about a fun fair. One of the characters appearing in the drawing is Sara. She is holding a toy octopus she won at the fair. In one of the exercises, the pupils have to complete the sentence ‘Sara has...’ with one of the options given being ‘an octopus’. The blanks can easily be filled by looking up the person mentioned on the drawing and finding the number of the object (s)he holds in the list of word combinations to choose from. The pupils are familiar with the characters, as they recurrently appear in the book. The persons’ names are also mentioned in the picture.

During the lesson from which this episode stems, teacher Fatima first picks out words occurring in the lesson, asking the children to clarify them. Sometimes she names a Dutch word to be clarified (“I’ll say this one in Dutch, you have to say it in Turkish”), and sometimes a Turkish word (“I say it in Turkish, you say it in Dutch”). Then the pupils take turns responding to the exercise items in the book, usually followed by a clarification initiated by the teacher. In the episode, the teacher and the pupils discuss the meaning of *inktvīs* (octopus). Utterances originally produced in Turkish are displayed in roman letters. Dutch phrases are in italics.

Episode 2.3: You don’t need to know the Turkish word

- Teacher: Er, Müberra.  
 Müberra: *Sara has*. Where is Sara? Yes, Sara. *Number thirteen*.  
*Sara heeft. Neredeymiş, Sara? Ah, Sara. Nummertje dertien.*  
 Teacher: What has Sara?  
*Nesi var Sara’nın?*  
 Müberra: *Octopus*.  
*Inktvis*.  
 Teacher: *Octopus*. Is there anyone who knows what that is, children?  
*We talked about all x, but you may have forgotten it. Ruhan.*

- Inktvis.* Onun ne olduğunu bilen var mı çocuklar? Her hangi  
x konuşmuştuk ama belki unutmuş olabilirsiniz. Ruhan.
- Ruhan: Monster.  
Canavar.
- Pupils: (Laugh).
- Teacher: Monster?  
Canavar?
- Pupil: Monster fish.  
Canavar balığı.
- Teacher: Not a monster. Bahar.  
Canavar değil. Bahar.
- Bahar: Er, a fish, it swims in the pond.  
Uh, bir tane balık, uh havuzda yüzüyor.
- Teacher: A fish, but which fish. That fish has a name. Bétul.  
Balık ama hangi balık. Bir ismi var o balığının. Bétul.
- Bétul: It is under, it swims under in the sea.  
O o o altı, o denizin altında yüzüyor.
- Teacher: A fish that swims under in the sea. But fishes generally swim  
under in the sea because they can't swim on it. Feride.  
Denizin altında yüzen bir balık. Ama genelde denizin altında  
yüzerler balıklar. Üstünde yüzemiyorlar çünkü. Feride.
- Feride: A shark.  
Köpek balığı.
- Pupils: (Laugh).
- Teacher: It's not a shark. Müberra.  
Köpek balığı değil. Yok. Müberra.
- Müberra: Er, one he can't grab one like this, he has to flee like this, the  
ones who are not fast, he flees like this, he is also afraid at  
once and he suddenly grabs a fish like this.  
Uhm bir tane şöyle elemiyor xx biri şöyle kaçarsın xx hızlı  
olmayanlar şöyle kaçır o da korkuyor hemen ve böyle  
tutuveriyor bir tane balık.
- Teacher: Yes, you describe it nicely, I ask for its name. I will say its  
name because you have mixed it up a little bit. Octopus,  
children. Octopus. *Octopus* (very soft voice).  
Evet. Güzel tarif ediyorsunuz, ismini soruyorum. Ehm ben  
ismini söyleyim çünkü siz karıştırdınız birazcık. Mürekkep  
balığı çocuklar. Mürekkep balığı. *Inktvis.*
- Pupils: Ah yes! Octopus yes.  
Ah ja! Mürekkep balığı ja.
- [...]

- Teacher: For the last time. I asked, are there any things on pages 22 and 23 you want to ask? Bétul.  
Son defa, soruyordum: sayfa 22, 23'te sormak istediğiniz bir şey var mı?
- [...]
- Ruhan: I forgot the name of what Sara has in her hands.  
Sara, elindeki şeyi unutuyum ismini.
- Teacher: Octopus, but you don't need to know that. Know it in Dutch, and know what kind of animal it is, but you don't need to know the word, the Turkish word. Okay? When you are only able to describe it to me, that's enough.  
Mürekkep balığı, onu bilmeni gerek yok, Holladacasını bil, uh, nasıl bir hayvan olduğunu bil, ama sözcüğünü bilmek zorunda değilsin, Türkçe sözcüğünü. Tamam mı? Yalnızca bana tarif edebilsen, yeter.

In this episode, the teacher and her pupils negotiated in Turkish about the meaning of the Dutch word *inktvis*, which they encountered in an exercise connected with an additional vocabulary lesson from the language arts textbook. Completing the exercise did not necessarily require the pupils to know the Dutch name for what Sara has in her hands. They could easily find the name by searching for the number of that object. The teacher, however, wanted the pupils to go beyond, matching the Dutch target word with a visual representation. Without making that explicit in her initial question, she wanted the pupils to mention the Turkish equivalent of the Dutch target word. Given the fact that the denotation of the Dutch target word had already been shown to them, it is unlikely that the teacher wanted the pupils to demonstrate that they knew what the Dutch word means by giving its Turkish equivalent. In sequences of teacher initiation, pupil response, and teacher feedback, the teacher tried to elicit this Turkish word.

When all five pupils engaged in the interaction had had their responses partly or completely turned down, the teacher came up with the Turkish word herself, which Ruhan wanted to hear again shortly after. Contrary to what the teacher had been suggesting until then, and contrary to what Ruhan thought, it then turned out that it was not the Turkish word, but the Dutch word which they should try to remember. Throughout the lesson, Turkish remained the sole language of communication. Dutch was used only in dictating textbook instructions or, once, as a filler (cf. "Where is Sara?"). Note that in the regular and DL2 class, the

use of languages other than Dutch is not allowed. It is up to the pupils to learn to distinguish between these sociolinguistic nuances in the everyday reality of a multicultural school.

Not knowing or having forgotten the Turkish word for octopus, Ruhan, an unidentified pupil, Bahar, Bétul, Feride, and Müberra came up with several Turkish descriptions of an octopus. These are listed in Table 2.2.

Pupil	Turkish description	English translation
Ruhan	canavar	monster
Unidentified pupil	canavar balığı	monster fish
Bahar	bir tane balık, uh havuzda yüzüyor	a fish, he swims in the pond
Bétul	o o o altı o denizin altında yüzüyor	he swims under in the sea
Feride	köpek balığı	a shark (literally 'dog fish')
Müberra	kaçarsın, korkuyor, tutuveriyor	he should flee, he is afraid, he suddenly grabs
Teacher	mürekkep balığı	octopus (literally 'ink fish')

Table 2.2: Pupils' and teacher's Turkish descriptions of an octopus

In expressing and evaluating these paradigmatic (octopus-fish, octopus-monster) and syntagmatic (octopus-shark) relations concerning an octopus, the pupils demonstrated their understanding of this word and their ability to express this understanding in Turkish. However, unlike Ed, Fatima did not expect the pupils to define the words occurring in *Taalmaatje*, but she expected them to know the Turkish equivalents of the words, which she had probably mentioned before when the lesson from *Taalmaatje* was discussed in her classroom for the first time. Whereas the first activity of finding a legitimate Dutch word-picture relationship can be expected to contribute primarily to knowledge of Dutch, this additional activity can only be expected to contribute primarily to knowledge of Turkish, which is not in accordance with her claim that in her class "it is about the Dutch word".

Although the pupils' reactions to the teacher's request to produce the Turkish word for an octopus showed that it was not self-evident that their lexical knowledge of Turkish exceeded their lexical knowledge of Dutch, Fatima assumed that, in general, her pupils were more proficient in Turkish than in Dutch. In her classroom, "they can also ask questions in Turkish, that's way easier than in Dutch" (Fatima 2:2). At the same time, she held:



“There are also children who don’t even know the meaning in Turkish of a word from a picture. So then you should not only teach the Dutch meaning but also the Turkish meaning, of course.” (Fatima 1:10)

While this belief, which was expressed shortly before the observations in her classroom were carried out, is in accordance with what happened in the episode, it is not in accordance with what she contended in retrospect:

“A word like ‘octopus’ does not occur in daily life, in their world, so to say. [...]. For example, octopus, that was not familiar to the children. So then I could hardly go on with a Turkish translation of octopus. I didn’t need that then.” (Fatima 2:2)

According to data on the pupils’ home language use, all the pupils except Bahar claimed that they spoke Turkish the best, which is true of most Turkish pupils growing up in the Netherlands until the fourth grade (cf. Extra *et al.* 2001). Verhoeven (1987:245) showed that, at the end of year four, Turkish/Dutch bilingual pupils have a more extended receptive and productive Turkish vocabulary, regardless of whether literacy instruction is given in Turkish or in Dutch. Verhallen *et al.* (1999) claim, on the basis of word association tasks containing equivalents in Dutch and Turkish, that at the age of nine, i.e., at grade six, Turkish pupils know Dutch words more thoroughly than Turkish words. Thus, inasmuch as the relative vocabulary size in different languages can be compared, it appears that, from the age of eight, Turkish/Dutch pupils are inclined to encounter Dutch words whose Turkish counterpart they do not know (if there is any). Obviously, a teacher cannot know to what extent a Dutch target word and its Turkish equivalent are known to individual pupils. Hence, she cannot know whether it is of any help to name the Turkish word or if she only complicates the language teaching/learning process by doing so.

## Chapter 5

### Spelling teaching

In the regular class, systematic attention is paid to spelling, using a spelling textbook. One of the recurrent spelling practices we observed, however, was initiated by the teacher himself. These practices were aimed at the rules of consonant doubling and vowel dropping. According to the elementary, phonological principle of Dutch spelling, tense vowels are written with a double letter (*aa, oo, ee, uu, ie*), while lax vowels are, like most consonants, written with a single letter (*a, o, e, u, i*). Doubling of consonants occurs if the previous syllable of the word would otherwise become open; it indicates that the previous vowel is and should remain lax. Vowel dropping implies that a tense vowel is represented by a single rather than a double vowel letter in open syllables (Woordenlijst 1995:18-19). Table 2.3 illustrates the working of these deviations from the phonological spelling principle. The received pronunciation of words is expressed in the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Spelling rule	Pronunciation	Spelling	Translation
phonological rule	/val/	val	'fall' (stem)
consonant doubling	/valən/	vallen	'to fall' (infinitive)
phonological rule	/slap/	slaap	'sleep' (stem)
vowel dropping	/slapən/	slapen	'to sleep' (infinitive)

Table 2.3: Consonant doubling and vowel dropping in Dutch spelling

The table shows that the spelling of *val* and *slaap*, which both represent closed syllables, is in accordance with the elementary spelling rules of Dutch. The corresponding infinitives are spelled according to the consonant doubling rule and the vowel dropping rule, respectively. In *slapen*, the *a* represents the nucleus of an open syllable. In *vallen*, *ll* represents the ambisyllabic /l/, which closes the first syllable.

In Episode 2.4, Ed deals with these spelling rules again. The non-native Dutch girls Jamilla, Nasira, Feride, and Aysegül have just been invited to the blackboard.

Episode 2.4: And then we need the twins again

- Teacher: Now calm down again for a moment. Just think. There are short, and there are long sounds.  
*Nou even stil weer. Even nadenken. Er zijn korte, en er zijn lange klanken.*
- Pupil: (Yawns).
- Teacher: Can you give an example of a long sound, Stéfanie.  
*Geef 's een voorbeeldje van een lange klank, Stéfanie.*
- Stéfanie: Sleep.  
*Slapen.*
- Teacher: Sleep. Sleep. And what do you know again about those long sounds?  
*Slapen. Slapen. En wat weet je ook alweer van die lange klanken?*
- Stéfanie: Well, then there's just one *p*.  
*Nou, dan is er maar één p.*
- Teacher: And also one?  
*En ook één?*
- Stéfanie: *a.*
- Pupil: *a.*
- Teacher: *a.* Sleep. Very well.  
*a. Sla:pen. Goed zo.*

Following this, Ed dictates the sentence *Wij slapen in een bed* (we sleep in a bed), which is written on the blackboard by the four girls. Once the pupils have written down the sentence in their notebooks, Ed dictates the second sentence:

- Teacher: The second sentence. Watch it. We fall on the ground.  
*De tweede zin. Let op. Wij vallen op de grond.*
- Pupil: Oops.  
*Oei.*
- Teacher: We'll see if they do it right. We fall on the ground. And think for yourselves, okay. *Wij* (we) of course with a long *ij* again. We fall on the ground.  
*Wij kijken of ze 't goed doen. Wij vallen op de grond. En zelf nadenken hè. 'Wij' natuurlijk weer met een lange ij. Wij vallen op de grond.*  
 (Silence of 6 seconds).

Teacher: Don't copy from somebody else, because then you'll do it wrong, ok. Then you look at. Well, think. To fall. Is that a long sound or a short sound?  
*Niet bij een ander kijken, want dan doe je 't verkeerd hè. Dan kijk je naar. Nou, nadenken. Vallen. Is dat een lange klank of een korte klank?*

Pupil: Bouchra! (whispering).

Teacher: Is it an /a/ or an /ɑ/?  
*Is het een /a/ of een /ɑ/?*

Aysegül: (Writes 'valen').  
 (Silence of 7 seconds).

Teacher: Aysegül, now can you go and stand a metre backwards. No, stay in front of the board, but just go backwards. Go, Yes. With your face to the board. And now stand a metre backwards. Take one step backwards. Exactly. And now you go read what it says. We sleep in a bed. And what does it say then? Ssh. She's going to wipe. Let's see what she's going to do now.  
*Aysegül, ga nou 's een metertje achteruit staan. Nee, voor het bord blijven staan, maar gewoon achteruit. Ga 's, Ja. Met je gezicht naar het bord toe. En nou een meter achteruit gaan staan. Eén stap achteruit doen. Juist. En nou ga je lezen wat er staat. Wij slapen in een bed. En wat staat er dan? Sst. Ze gaat vegen. Kijken wat ze nou gaat doen.*

Pupil: Little mistake.  
*Foutje.*

Pupil: Wrong.  
*Fout.*

Teacher: Ssh. And Nasira should do that as well, okay. Read what you write. That's important as well, right. If you have written something, to read for a moment. What does it say?  
*Sst. En dat moet Nasira ook doen hè. Lezen wat je schrijft. Da's ook belangrijk hè. Als je iets opgeschreven hebt, om eventjes te lezen. Wat staat er?*

Aysegül: (Writes 'vaalen').

Pupil: \*Fall.  
 \*Valen.

Pupil: Can I look?  
*Kijken?*

Pupil: \*Fall.  
 \*Valen.

- Pupil: Now there's \*fall twice.  
*Nou staat er twee keer \*valen.*
- Pupils: Oops!  
*Oei!*
- Teacher: Now, now we are quiet again, okay. Now, I don't want to hear every time. Let them think for themselves. On the ground.  
*Nou, nou zijn wij stil hè. Nou wil ik niet elke keer horen. Laat ze zelfnadenken. Op de grond.*
- Teacher: Well, can you explain it Jordi. Fall.  
*Nou, leg het maar 's uit Jordi. Vallen.*
- Jordi: We, er, fall, there you need two little *ls*, because otherwise it would be \*fall.  
*Wij uh vallen daarzo moet uh twee elletjes, want anders was het \*valen.*
- Teacher: Right. I need two little *ls* on the, with fall. It's a short sound. And then we need the twins again, right. They need to give support.  
*Juist. Ik moet twee elletjes hebben op de, bij vallen. 't Is een korte klank. En dan hebben we de tweeling weer nodig hè. Die moet een steuntje geven.*

After this episode, four native Dutch boys were asked to spell two other sentences with words to which vowel dropping and consonant doubling apply. The whole lesson took about twenty minutes.

After the lesson, Ed told the observer that “they find that hard, especially the Moroccans, they often don't hear that difference between short and long vowels”. Presumably, this unsolicited account was prompted by Aysegül, who misspelled *vallen* as *valen* and *vaalen*. Apart from Nasira, she was the only immigrant minority pupil who made spelling mistakes on the blackboard. In the retrospective interview, Ed stated:

- Ed: Well, it is especially this group, and I also noticed that among Moroccans and such, for example, if I say, *hij hoopte* (he hoped), then they don't hear the /o/ exactly. That's what I had with my Italian as well. I also taught an Italian man, right. They don't hear if it is an /o/ or an /ɔ/. That sound is the same for them.
- JB: So you notice that among pupils here as well?

- Ed: Yes. Because *ik hoop* (I hope), then we clearly hear two *os*, right. But they hear that less. So then they also write *hop* more easily.
- JB: And that could also be the case with Aysegül?
- Ed: That could be the case with Aysegül as well, yes. Well, that's for sure. Yes, with that kind of word then. (Ed 5:8)

When he read over the transcript of the episode again, he commented:

"I see here that Aysegül writes *vaalen*, right, with two *as*, when she's going to correct it. Indeed, that's an indication that she can't hear it at all. Because then you wouldn't change *vallen* into *valen*. Yes. That's indeed like hearing correctly if it is a short or a long sound. I think that maybe that's even more so with the *a*. *Vallen*, *valen*. That that is still less clear to them." (Ed 5:11)

Ed thus hypothesised that Aysegül, like other immigrant pupils and his Italian student, an adult relative, often does not perceive the difference between tense and lax vowels, in particular the difference between the /a/ and the /ɑ/, and, therefore, has difficulty spelling words like *vallen* on the basis of a spelling rule that presupposes the ability to make this distinction. In other words, his pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman 1986), or more specifically, his understanding of what made the learning of dropping and doubling difficult for Aysegül, rested on the stereotype of an immigrant minority pupil mixing up vowels.

The teacher is not the only one who has pointed to the phonological awareness of immigrant minority pupils. Various handbooks on language teaching refer to the supposedly common difficulty among Turkish and Moroccan pupils of distinguishing between tense and lax vowels owing to the fact that this feature is not distinctive in Turkish and Arabic (Nijmeegse Werkgroep Taaldidactiek 1992:416; Verhoeven 1992:337; Appel & Vermeer 1994:25; Appel, Kuiken & Vermeer 1995:29). The teacher's guide to *Zin in taal-Spelling* contains similar warnings. Apart from the general remark that immigrant minority pupils often have difficulties in relying on the pronunciation of words, specific reference is made to the speech perceptions of immigrant minority pupils in the introduction to the unit of lessons in which consonant doubling is treated for the first time:

"The open syllable and consonant doubling raise difficulties among many pupils. On top of that, immigrant minority pupils often cannot hear the difference between long and short sounds. At this stage, remedial

teaching consists of practising the words following the principle of analogy.” (Cranshoff & Zuidema 1997:205)

However, empirical studies on the development of Turkish/Dutch bilingualism among children of Aysegül’s age invalidate the generalisation that immigrant minority pupils have difficulty with the distinction between tense and lax vowels. It is highly improbable that Aysegül, who had attended *de Rietschans* from the first year on, who spoke both Turkish and Dutch at home, and who was repeating the fourth grade, still made spelling mistakes owing to misperception of the vowel in the first syllable in *vallen*. The problems with respect to this ability foreseen in pedagogical handbooks generally merely apply to second language learners who have been exposed to the Dutch language for a relatively short period of time, such as first year immigrant children, or recently arrived immigrants, such as Ed’s Italian relative (in whose mother tongue, Italian, the /a/ is indeed not part of the vowel inventory).

Rather than having difficulty with the difference between the /a/ and the /ɑ/, Ed’s ‘hint’ “is it an /a/ or an /ɑ/?” may well have had an impact on Aysegül’s spelling of *vallen*. As it suggested that it was the vowel rather than the consonant which was at issue here, as in the case of the previous word treated, it may have induced her to spell *vallen* in analogy with *slapen* – that is, with one vowel letter and one consonant letter. The emphasis on the opposition between the two sounds may have even put her on the track of the elementary, phonological spelling rule, which dictates that the /a/ in *vallen* should be written as *a*, and the /l/ as *l*. The elementary writing strategy is also applied to words that lack one-to-one phoneme-grapheme correspondence.

Standing back a step so that she could “see more easily if it’s right or wrong” and “read it better” (Ed 5:11) did not make Aysegül revise *valen* correctly. As Ed himself stated while reflecting on Jordi’s explanation, reading what she had written did not make Aysegül realise what it was she did wrong. Even if her misspelling was an ‘accident’, i.e., not the result of a fundamental misconception of the spelling system, she would still encounter the pitfall of decoding the word as intended, which pupils of this age tend to do with pseudo-words like *valen* (Meulenkamp 2000:155). Ed was well aware of this tendency:

“They often read what I say, right. In a dictation text, I say a sentence, and when they have written that sentence, they say exactly what I said. But not what they wrote down.” (Ed 5:11)

From the fact that Ed asked her to read, Aysegül probably simply concluded that something was wrong with *valen*. If she still believed that the /a/ was the problem, it seems plausible that she reasoned that *vallen* should then, apparently, be written with two *as*. She may also have recollected the ‘official’ rule ‘if you hear a short sound, you write the twins’ from previous lessons, and have considered the ‘twins’ as a double vowel letter.

The spelling instructions Ed gave for teaching dropping and doubling to his pupils may not have been consistent with his belief with respect to the phonological awareness of immigrant minority pupils, however, they were consistent with his didactic principles of whole-class instruction, repetition, and formal, concise representations of knowledge. His scepticism about the lack of repetition in the language arts textbook applied to the spelling textbook as well:

“So, officially, this is the spelling we have to do, right. That’s a matter of, say, one lesson every time, so I think that we should do two or three lessons per week. And such a textbook assumes that they then know it. Well, those things need to be practised ten, twenty times. Every time again. Including why. Why one *o*, why one *e*?” (Ed 5:2)

From Ed’s perspective, pupils need to be confronted with and copy explicit representations of the subject matter on a regular basis, assuming that this explicit knowledge will eventually lead to correctly spelled, written products. This held all the more for his pupils:

“It is, after all, a matter of training, practising, repeating. And in particular with our children. [...] Look, normally, you can say something to someone, and then he knows it. Someone with reason says, oh yeah, of course. That’s how it works. But these children need to practise it hundreds of times.” (Ed 3:6)

Apparently, the power he ascribed to simple, transparent, and explicit representations, such as the condensed spelling rules, was stronger than the impact of the belief that pupils lack the necessary phonological preconceptions to make sense of these forms of representation. As he had taught the fourth and the fifth years for many years in a row, it is likely that these spelling lessons had become habitual teaching practices which were resistant to recently acquired, stereotypical knowledge of immigrant minority pupils.





## Chapter 6

### Mathematics teaching

For several years, Ed has used the math textbook *Rekenen en Wiskunde* (Van Galen *et al.* 1984a,b,c,d), which was designed with a view to teaching socially disadvantaged pupils. This was the reason it was introduced at *de Rietschans*. During the main week of observation, most of the math lessons were devoted to preparatory activities for learning to add and subtract beyond ten, with which the class had already started before the autumn holidays. These preparatory activities, which take nine lessons in the planning of the textbook, aim at the ability to conjoin and split up operations. In order to be able to add, e.g., 13 and 8, the pupils are taught that the operation '+ 8' can be partitioned into '+ 7' and '+ 1'. In the seventh lesson, problems are practised in which the addend replacing two others is given, while one of the two addends to be replaced is missing, as in:

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 + 3 + \dots \\ 5 + 4 = \end{array}$$

In the textbook, the problem is introduced with the lines: "What should be written above the line? + 1, because + 4 is the same as first + 3 and then still + 1". The lesson comprises 24 such sums. In the teacher guide, it is explained that in this lesson

"the aim is to calculate the missing operation (above the line). This is supposed to be done by splitting the operation below the line (+ 4), whereby the first part of the splitting is known ( $4 = 3 + \dots$ ). By subsequently calculating the sum in two ways, the correctness of the splitting is checked:  $5 + 3 = 8$ ,  $8 + 1 = 9$ , and  $5 + 4 = 9$ " (Van Galen *et al.* 1984c:157).

Episode 2.5 stems from the lesson in which Ed deals with these problems. After having dealt with twelve problems with the whole class, Ed asks if there is anyone who hasn't understood the problem. Those who indicated they did not, Bétul, Nasira, Bouchra, Faïna, Joey, Dennis, Vincent, Sharona, Arzu, and Feride, gather together in the middle of the fourth grade classroom. They now solve the problems under the supervision of the teacher. The other pupils proceed on their own. The fourth problem treated in the middle group reads:

$$\begin{array}{r} 8 + 1 + \dots \\ 8 + 2 = \end{array}$$

The episode in which this problem is being discussed reads as follows.

Episode 2.5: So I already added one

- Teacher: Let's move to the last sum. The last sum. Off we go again.  
Eight. What do I write down Nasira?  
*Ik kom aan het onderste sommetje. Het laatste sommetje. Daar gaat ie weer. Acht. Wat schrijf ik op Nasira?*
- Nasira: Eight add up one.  
*Acht erbij één.*
- Teacher: Add-up one add-up. Eight and one and (in a falling tone).  
*Erbij één erbij. Acht en één en.*
- Pupil: One.  
*Eén.*
- Teacher: But I shouldn't add ;one, I should?  
*Maar ik moet er geen één bij doen, ik moet er?*
- Nasira: Eight add-up two.  
*Acht erbij twee.*
- Teacher: There should be?  
*D'r moeten d'r?*
- Nasira: Eight add-up two.  
*Acht erbij twee.*
- Teacher: Two should be added to that. So I shouldn't add one, but two.  
How many ;did I already add? Bétul?  
*D'r moeten er twee bij. Dus ik moet er geen één bij doen, maar twee. Hoeveel ;heb ik er al bij gedaan? Bétul?*
- Bétul: Two.  
*Twee.*
- Teacher: Does it say in yours: eight plus two? What does it say in yours then? In the, in your notebook? Now what did you write down?  
*Staat er dan bij jou: acht plus twee? Wat staat er bij jou dan? In het, in je schrift? Wat heb je nou opgeschreven?*
- Bouchra: Yes!  
*Yes!*
- Teacher: What did you write down?  
*Wat heb jij opgeschreven?*

- Bouchra: Plus seven.  
*Plus zeven.*
- Teacher: What?  
*Hè?*
- Bouchra: Plus seven.  
*Plus zeven.*
- Teacher: Plus seven. Just ;two need to be added. And then you say: plus seven. Just two need to be added. And how many did you already add? What did you write down? Eight plus?  
*Plus zeven. D'r hoeven er maar ;twee bij. En dan zeg jij: plus zeven. D'r hoeven er maar twee bij. En hoeveel heb je d'r al bij gedaan? Wat heb je opgeschreven? Acht plus?*
- Bouchra: Eight plus one plus.  
*Acht plus één plus.*
- Teacher: Stop. Eight plus one. So I already added one.  
*Stop. Acht plus één. Dus ik heb er al één bij gedaan.*
- Pupil: Me too.  
*Heb ik ook.*
- Teacher: And two had to be added. How many do I still have to add now?  
*En d'r ;moesten er twee bij. Hoeveel moet ik er nou nog bij doen?*
- Bouchra: Two.  
*Twee.*
- Teacher: Listen. Look, look, look. Two have to be added. Yes? Just look in the book. Eight plus two. I ;have already done: eight plus ;one. How many do I still have to add now?  
*Luister. Kijken, kijken kijken. Er moeten er twee bij. Ja? Kijk maar in 't boek. Acht plus twee. Ik heb al gedaan: acht plus ;één. Hoeveel moet ik er nou nog bij doen?*
- Bouchra: One.  
*Eén.*
- Teacher: Now one to add still. So what sum do I get? Eight plus one plus?  
*Nou nog één erbij. Dus wat krijg ik voor een sommetje? Acht plus één plus?*
- Bouchra: Eight plus one plus one.  
*Acht plus één plus één.*
- Teacher: One. Eight plus one plus one (tapping rhythm on table). And then I have outcome?  
*Eén. Acht plus één plus één. En dan heb ik uitkomst?*

Faïna: Ten.  
*Tien.*  
 Teacher: Ten.  
*Tien*

In this episode, it is again the teacher who asks questions, it is the pupils who, if called on by the teacher, reply, and it is the teacher again who evaluates these replies in sequences of initiation, response, and feedback elements (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). There turn out to be six questions with which the teacher tries to lead the children through the process of solving a problem, each of which is intended to elicit a specific number or operation that is either given or the outcome of calculation:

1. What do I write down?
2. But I shouldn't add one, I should ...?
3. How many did I already add?
4. How many do I still have to add now?
5. So what sum do I get?
6. And then I have which outcome?

The pupils' replies to these questions include only numerals and operators. They merely verbalise mathematical symbols literally, without getting the opportunity to make explicit their constructions. The teacher's evaluation of the pupils' replies to these questions is not given in terms of 'right' or 'wrong', but instead takes the form of a declarative or a question. Altogether, these questions aimed at particular numbers and operations constitute an algorithm that is supposed to generate the solution to the problems.

Noticeably, the algorithm does not automatically lead to a smoothly flowing interaction. Especially the third and fourth question, in which Bétul and Bouchra are involved, requires several clarifications before the desired answer is given. This exemplifies what is happening throughout the lesson, in which 26 out of 70 questions were answered incorrectly while dealing with these problems. In 7 out of the 26 questions, the teacher asked for the 'number that was already added' (question 3), and, in 4 cases, for 'the number that still has to be added' (question 4).

The sources of the problems the pupils have in answering the third and fourth question do not surface in the interaction. The pupils do not make explicit the difficulties they are encountering, while the teacher does not probe the difficulties either. A combination of related factors have made it difficult for the pupils to understand the mathematical

reasoning involved in answering the teacher's questions. When it comes to the pupils, it should be noted that the pupils engaged in the event generally underachieve in math. The standard math test administered by the school indicates that, in comparison to a national sample, Bétul and Nasira belong to the 25 per cent lowest scoring pupils, while Faïna and Bouchra scored right below the national average. When it comes to the teacher, a number of factors may have complicated the pupils' understanding. Apart from mathematical-didactical intricacies, this has to do with a particular feature of the teacher's language of instruction.

In all of the teacher's questions and instructions, the operations in the given problem are conceived of as actions anchored in a time span. While the operation below the line (+ 2) was usually phrased in the present tense without reference to a particular time, the teacher once used the past tense in reminding the pupils of what had been said before about this operation. The given operation above the line (+ 1) was considered to be an action that took place in the past as soon as it had been copied into the notebooks, which was expressed through present perfect tense marking and the temporal adverbial *al* (already). In Dutch, the teacher used the construction *Dus ik heb er al één bijgedaan* (so I already added one), in which *bijgedaan* is the past participle with *heb* as auxiliary verb. The missing operation was considered to be the action that had to be performed at the moment of speaking. This was indicated by the present tense and the adverbials *nou* (now) and *nog* (still). The correspondence between the different anchorings in time and the different addends in the problem is summarised in Table 2.4.

Addend	Tense marking in Dutch	Example
+ 1 (given)	present perfect + <i>al</i>	I already added one. <i>Ik heb er al één bijgedaan.</i>
+ 2 (given)	simple present	Two should be added to that. <i>Er moeten er twee bij.</i>
	simple past	Two had to be added. <i>D'r moesten er twee bij.</i>
+ 1 (missing)	simple present + <i>nou nog</i>	How many do I still have to add now? <i>Hoeveel moet ik er nou nog bijdoen?</i>

Table 2.4: Time anchoring of addends in the teacher's instructions

In referring to different symbolic configurations, the teacher further distinguished between the equations above and below the line by contrasting the documents where the equations could be found. Hence, the

symbolic configuration  $8 + 1 (+)$  was referred to as what had to be written or what had been written down in the notebooks, while  $8 + 2$  was taken to be retrievable from the textbook. Throughout the math lesson, the teacher was consistent in this type of reference to (configurations of) numbers and operations.

Misunderstanding these subtle differences may well have complicated Bétul's, Bouchra's, and other pupils' understanding of questions like "How many did I already add?" and "How many do I still have to add now?", which they answered incorrectly in eleven instances of the lesson. Not only did they have to understand these questions as intended, they also had to understand the preceding paraphrases of the problem, in which these subtle distinctions were made as well. The covertness of this feature of the mathematical register as compared to difficult vocabulary items, for example, counteracts the teacher's awareness of the difficult nature of the feature, and thus his alertness to the problems of understanding that may arise from it. While in interviews the teacher postulates differences in first and second language learning pupils' vocabulary and 'feeling for language', he does not connect this observation to his language of instruction. In his view, there is, by and large, no need to deal with differences in language proficiency "because they have a sufficient command to listen to and to hold a conversation" (Ed 1:31). Hence, the teacher is not expecting pupils to have difficulty comprehending which symbolic configuration he is referring to. At the same time, the identification and glossing of such problems by the pupils themselves requires a level of meta-cognitive and linguistic abilities they may not have achieved. Besides, the teacher strictly adheres to the algorithm, which pupils would have to break through to signal problems of understanding or to request clarification.

## Chapter 7

### Discussion

As pointed out before, the Dutch government puts a high premium on combatting negative effects on the learning and developmental opportunities of pupils resulting from their social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. A particular target group of the educational compensatory policy is defined in terms of the country of birth and level of education of the parents. The Dutch language proficiency of the pupils belonging to this target group is central in the national policy frameworks and additional policy documents.

At *de Rietschans*, almost forty per cent of the pupils speak another language at home apart from, or instead of, Dutch. They are discouraged from speaking any language other than Dutch at school. Not only is the exclusion of people from a conversation as a result of not using a lingua franca considered to be impolite, talking another language is also thought to be a missed opportunity to practise Dutch. Those who do speak other languages at home attend special DL2 and language-support lessons, i.e., lessons in Turkish and Moroccan-Arabic devoted to Dutch vocabulary, in addition to the structural attention being paid to this aspect of language proficiency in the regular class. The school recently adopted the language arts textbook *Zin in taal-Taal*, which claims to be an appropriate method for multilingual pupil populations. Materials from this textbook are used in both the fourth grade regular classroom and in the withdrawal classes. The school keeps track of all the pupils' achievements on the basis of standard national tests, participates in endeavours to teach Dutch to the pupils' mothers, and introduced an early intervention programme in the pre- and early school years. As regards the objectives and priorities of the curriculum, the policy of the school is congruent with the national policy.

Ed's accounts revealed different perceptions of differences between native and non-native pupils with respect to their proficiency in Dutch. When relating these perceptions to the practices observed in the episodes discussed, three types of pedagogic reactions to non-native pupils can be reconstructed. The first type implies that the teacher perceived a deficiency in the Dutch language skills of non-native Dutch pupils,



which elicited a certain pedagogic response. The second type implies that the teacher perceived a deficiency which, however, was not taken into account in his pedagogic practice. The third type implies that the teacher perceived sufficiency and, hence, did not take calculated action. In Table 2.5, these reactions are linked to the language skills to which they apply.

Type	Language skill	Perception	Response
1	Vocabulary	Deficiency	Action
2	Auditory discrimination	Deficiency	Inaction
3	'Conversational command'	Sufficiency	Inaction

Table 2.5: Perceptions of and responses to non-native pupils' language skills

The reactions, which reflect the teacher's practical knowledge, i.e., his knowledge and beliefs about teaching which arose out of his experiences as a student and a professional (cf. Meijer 1999), can be understood in the light of the teacher's biography and his educational environment. The teacher's experiences as a student date back to the 1940s and 1950s. In the following three decades, Ed taught predominantly monolingual Dutch pupil populations. In the course of these decades, he can be expected to have developed routines for the most regularly taught contents of the language arts curriculum, which are tailored to monolingual pupil populations. It was not until 1990, when his school amalgamated with another school, that he suddenly had to deal with multilingualism in his classroom. A decade of teaching in this new context resulted in his gaining knowledge of multilingual pupil populations – knowledge that appears to be accurate, as well as knowledge that is likely to be inaccurate in the given context.

Informed by his own observations, test scores, 'messages' from the school, the textbook, and other voices in the educational field, Ed acquired the insight that there are differences between native and non-native pupils in level of vocabulary and that vocabulary requires systematic attention. At the same time, vocabulary was a subject matter which he could easily incorporate into his daily routines. It constitutes a clear content, which, from Ed's perspective, could be transmitted in the didactic fashion he preferred. The progress made can be read from scores in standardised tests, which indicate the achievement level of the individual pupil compared with the national averages. Vocabulary tests even yield the estimated number of words the pupil knows. Hence, at the level

of vocabulary, the teacher perceived a deficiency in the Dutch language proficiency of non-native Dutch pupils and responded accordingly.

In addition, the teacher's own observations told him that the immigrant minority pupils had difficulties in choosing the right article, that they had trouble constructing a sentence from mixed-up parts of speech, and that his Italian relative, who arrived in the Netherlands when he was an adult, could not hear the difference between short and long vowels. From these observations, he concluded that non-native Dutch pupils lack a "feeling" for Dutch. Unlike his reflections on vocabulary, these accounts were given in the context of the treatment of what he interpreted as traditional subject matter, for which he can be expected to have developed routines which originated from practices in monolingual classrooms. In the terms of Gogolin (1994), Ed was submersed in a monolingual habitus, i.e., a professional pedagogical disposition, which is, apparently, rather resistant to reflections on the new, multilingual context. Hence, the perceived deficiency in auditory discrimination coincided with instructions which took these skills for granted.

There were no compelling signals from the educational field or from within his own classroom alerting Ed to potential problem sources hidden in instructional language. Indeed, linguists and educationalists have emphasised the crucial role of language as a vehicle in the construction of knowledge and the discrepancy between (the variety of) the national language used at school and the language (varieties) used at the homes of pupils. However, the precise difficulties in understanding language manifest in actual practice in multilingual classrooms have, apart from more obvious lexical hindrances, yet to be discovered. Evidently, Ed was not aware of these hindrances either. He assumed that the language proficiency of his pupils was sufficient to understand his mathematical instructions. The teacher-controlled interaction in his classroom complicated the identification and clarification of language-related problems of understanding. Hence, the teacher did not perceive and, thus, did not respond to potential deficiencies in, e.g., the ability to distinguish between subtle nuances in temporal marking.

This typology of pedagogic reactions to non-native Dutch pupils does not apply to the teachers of the withdrawal classes. Their practices were, much more than Ed's, bound by national, municipal, and school policies. National policies facilitate the employment of a teacher of DL2. Municipal policies prescribed that, in the fourth grade, minority language teaching be supportive of the regular curriculum. It was a decision of the

school to organise separate classes for DL2 and to devote all withdrawal classes entirely to Dutch vocabulary. The adoption of the language arts textbook used by these teachers was also a joint decision. Hence, the practices observed in these classrooms may reflect the first type of reaction – after all, all these teachers verbalised a concern for the Dutch vocabulary of non-native Dutch pupils and responded to that concern – yet they had no other option.

Perhaps the host of compensatory policies issued by the national government, the municipality, and the school inhibited Ed from becoming fully aware of the implications of multilingualism. The political endeavour to improve the Dutch language proficiency of immigrant minority pupils had, at the micro-level of the school, merely resulted in withdrawal classes for immigrant minority pupils and the agreement not to speak languages other than Dutch outside the language-support classroom. This implies that the knowledge of and about different languages emerging from the everyday reality of pupils at home remained concealed at school, at least in the regular and DL2 classrooms, while it had the potential to serve as a basis for gaining access to school knowledge, on the one hand, and reflection on monolingual dispositions, on the other.

In conclusion, after having taught in a multilingual context for one decade, Ed's reactions to multilingual pupil populations did display an 'emergent' awareness of multilingualism. Not only did he perceive – accurately and inaccurately – differences between the language skills of native and non-native Dutch pupils, he was also pro-active in dealing with the most prominent difference he perceived – albeit in a manner that was incongruent with the dominant educational discourse. Perhaps this is an indication of the fact that the monolingual habitus, which is manifest in various other documented classroom practices in North-Western European immigration contexts as well (cf. Gogolin & Kroon 2000), is slowly beginning to erode.

## **Part III**

### **The case of Norway**

In this part, a selection of outcomes from the Norwegian case study of the third grade of *Ekelund* primary school is presented. It consists of ten chapters. A brief overview of the Norwegian educational system, with a special focus on language minority pupils, is presented in Chapter 8. The school, teachers, and pupils in the main research class are described in Chapter 9. In Chapter 10, we present information concerning certain characteristics of the form and content of the educational practice in the classroom, followed in Chapters 11-15 by more detailed presentations and discussions of selected episodes considered relevant for understanding multicultural classrooms as language learning settings. Some of these episodes come from the regular class; some are from the Norwegian as a second language class. In Chapter 11, we compare the educational discourse in two teaching episodes focusing on rhyming, one from a Norwegian as a first language (NL1) lesson and one from a Norwegian as a second language (NL2) lesson. In Chapter 12, two episodes illustrating qualitative differences in pupil participation are discussed, followed in Chapter 13 by two episodes illustrating the opportunities for vocabulary learning in the ordinary interaction in the classroom. All these episodes come from the NL2 class. In Chapter 14, we then present an episode from the regular classroom from a Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education lesson which emphasises the important role cultural knowledge plays in understanding classroom discourse. Chapter 15 deals with mathematics education. It presents discourse episodes showing the important role language plays in mathematics lessons and analyses implying that the pupils' problems concerning comprehension of the language of instruction may not always be directly observable by the teacher. In Chapter 16, we focus on mother tongue education in three different schools: the main research school and two

others. The focus of Chapter 17 is how the observed classroom practice in the research class can be related to the guidelines in the national curriculum, and how it resembles educational practice in other Norwegian classrooms at the same grade level.

Regarding terminology it is important to indicate that the pupils in focus in this study are referred to as pupils from 'language minorities'. This is in accordance with the terminology used in official educational documents in Norway (Curriculum 1999).

## Chapter 8

### The educational context

In 1997, as part of the wide-ranging educational reform called *Reform 97*, compulsory education in Norway was extended to ten years, i.e., from the ages of six to sixteen. The ten-year compulsory school, called *grunnskolen*, is founded on the basic principle of a unified school system, providing free, equitable, and individually adapted education to all pupils on the basis of a national curriculum and a common legislative framework. Over 98 per cent of Norwegian compulsory school pupils attend public schools (Eurydice 1998).

*Grunnskolen* is a comprehensive school divided into three main stages: initial or lower primary comprising grades one to four (aged six to ten), intermediate or upper primary comprising grades five to seven (aged ten to thirteen), and lower secondary comprising grades eight to ten (aged thirteen to sixteen). After having completed the ten-year compulsory education programme, all pupils between the ages of sixteen to nineteen have the right to three years of upper secondary education, which includes both general and vocational branches.

The first year at the primary stage is supposed to be along pre-school lines, with an emphasis on learning through play, and the pupils just get preparatory training in reading and writing. The Norwegian pre-primary provision, usually kindergarten, is voluntary and a fee is required. The Norwegian kindergarten, *barnehagen*, though educationally oriented, is not part of the education system and is therefore not the responsibility of the Ministry of Education but of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs.

At the primary level, the maximum number of pupils per class at the time of the project was 28, but the average was 20 for the school year 1999/2000 (SSB 2000). The classes are organised by age and are taught by a form teacher who usually teaches the class for a number of years. The form teacher is largely responsible for the teaching of most subjects, but can get assistance from subject specialists, for instance Physical Education or Music teachers. The pupils are taught in mixed ability classes, with provisions for extra help for pupils with special educational

needs. It is the responsibility of the municipalities to provide children between the age of six to sixteen with suitably adapted tuition.

The number of lessons (45-minute periods) per week ranges from a minimum of 20 in the first year to 30 in the final years of compulsory education (a school year is 38 weeks). The Ministry of Education issues regulations regarding the total number of teaching periods, but the municipality may allocate teaching hours in excess of the stipulated hours (Education Act 1998, Section 2.2). In addition to the lessons at school, Norwegian pupils also have to do homework.

Throughout the period of compulsory education, pupils automatically move on to the next grade. There is no formal assessment of pupils at the primary stages. However, various forms of informal assessment of individual pupils' efforts are part of the day-to-day learning process. Pupils should play an active part in their own assessment and are encouraged to take responsibility for, and reflect on, their achievements. The form teacher is supposed to have a conference with the parents at least twice a year to discuss the pupil's achievement in relation to the aims and contents of the curriculum, but emphasising individual aptitudes and learning processes. The main purpose of pupil assessment is to promote their learning and development. At the lower secondary stage, the pupils will be assessed both with and without grades. At this level, there is a system of grades and a final centrally set written examination in one of the three subjects: Norwegian, mathematics, or English.

In Norway, there is a long tradition of a common legislative framework and a national curriculum. The Ministry of Education has final responsibility for the development and approval of the curriculum, issuing both curricular and pedagogical guidelines. Following the implementation of *Reform 97*, a new national curriculum for the ten-year compulsory school, *Læreplanverket for den 10-årige grunnskolen* (1996), usually referred to as *Læreplan 97* or just *L97*, was published in 1996 and implemented in 1997. An English translation, *The Curriculum for the 10-year Compulsory School in Norway*, was published in 1999. In the present book we will mainly use the English translation, referring to it as Curriculum (1999).

Emphasis is placed on a central curriculum, issued as a directive:

"This is intended to ensure a nation-wide education system with a common content of knowledge, traditions and values regardless of where the pupils live, their social background, gender, religion or their mental

or physical ability. At the same time, there is still room for local and individual choice and adaptation, which is a long-standing principle in Norwegian school policy.” (Curriculum 1999: Preface)

The curriculum’s subject syllabuses stress that pupils should be active and independent, and encourage learning by doing, exploring and experimenting. The syllabuses also emphasize that training at the initial stage (grades one to four) should promote play and aim at learning through play. *L97* further advocates thematically organised teaching, containing elements of different subjects, especially at the primary stages. The teaching should gradually become more subject-specific as the pupils move up through the grades. The curriculum in Norwegian as a mother tongue intends “to provide a means of giving all pupils a shared platform of knowledge, values and culture” (Curriculum 1999:123). Education shall be based on fundamental Christian and humanistic values. Throughout the ten years of compulsory education, Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education is taught as a separate subject intended to include all pupils. A revised syllabus for this subject was introduced in August 2002, reducing the amount of centrally determined subject content.

It is the collective responsibility of the municipalities, school administrators, and staff to see that compulsory education is given in accordance with *L97* and the Education Act. To ensure that national educational policies are put into practice in compliance with statutes and regulations, the Ministry of Education delegates responsibilities of supervision and control to regional National Education Offices. There is one office in each of the eighteen counties in Norway. Since January 2003, these offices are integral parts of the Education Department of the County Governor’s office. As a national resource centre for the educational sector, the Norwegian Board of Education coordinates and supports activities promoting the quality of Norwegian education. From 2004, however, these tasks are performed by The Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education.

The language of instruction in schools is normally Norwegian. There are two official forms of the written Norwegian language, *bokmål* (which is significantly influenced by the Danish language historically) and *nynorsk* (with its origin in Norwegian rural dialects). The municipality decides which form of Norwegian will be the primary written language in any particular school. The primary language in Oslo schools is *bokmål*. In grades nine and ten of the lower secondary school, pupils are



however taught both forms. The pupils choose one of them as a primary, and one as a secondary form. Language minority pupils, attending NL2 lessons, are exempted from tuition in the Norwegian secondary form.

In Norway, there are also a significant number of Sami people, the indigenous minority population of the vast open areas of northern Europe, many of them having *Samisk* (Sami) as their first language. The right to Sami tuition is regulated in the 1998 Education Act. In Sami districts, all pupils at the primary school level have the right to receive tuition in Sami and through the medium of Sami. Sami pupils can choose Sami as their first language and one form of Norwegian as their second language or vice versa. There is a separate Sami curriculum to be used in certain Sami administrative regions of Norway:

“A separate curriculum, L97 Sami, has been drawn up to ensure that Sami pupils receive an education which preserves and develops the Sami language and Sami culture and social life.” (Curriculum 1999: Preface)

Pupils with sign language as their first language have right to elementary education in and by sign language (Education Act 1998, Section 2-6).

The 1998 Education Act also provides a statutory right to receive tuition in Finnish, provided that such tuition is requested by at least three pupils of Kven/Finnish heritage in attendance at a primary and lower secondary education school in the Kven/Finnish areas of Northern Norway:

“The course is intended to preserve and develop the Finnish language and culture in the Kven/Finnish communities in the counties of Finnmark and Troms.” (Curriculum 1999:331)

The syllabus for Finnish as a second language is included in the ordinary curriculum for the ten-year compulsory school.

Pupils now learn English from grade one throughout compulsory schooling; from grade eight, they can choose German, French, or another language which the school is able to offer as a second foreign language. The syllabuses for these additional foreign languages are included in the ordinary curriculum for the ten-year compulsory school (L97).

In 1999, the starting year of data collection, the number of immigrants in Norway was 260,742, making up nearly 6 per cent of the total number of 4,445,329 inhabitants. Of the approximately 580,300 compulsory school pupils during the school year 1999/2000, approximately 38,600, i.e., 6.6 per cent, were registered as language minority pupils (SSB 2000). In Oslo, Norway's capital, the percentage of language minority pupils was much higher, i.e., 28.6 per cent. The top ten minority language groups in Norwegian compulsory schools are (according to

size): Urdu, English, Vietnamese, Spanish, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian, Albanian, Turkish, Somali, and Tamil (SSB 2000). There is a broad political consensus in Norway on society's responsibility to ensure equal educational opportunities for all pupils and that the educational system has to adapt to the abilities and aptitudes of individual pupils in order to succeed (Education Act 1998, Section 1-2). The objective is to integrate all children, irrespective of physical or mental disability or learning difficulties, into the ordinary school system. Pupils with special needs receive special teaching in the classroom and in separate groups. Based on the principle of equal and suitably adapted teaching, compulsory education also has to cater for the needs of language minority pupils in order to have them acquire educational and vocational competence on a par with peer pupils. Municipalities are required to provide adjusted tuition for pupils from language minorities, that is, mother tongue instruction, bilingual subject teaching, and special Norwegian education (e.g., Norwegian as a second language), until the pupils have "sufficient knowledge of Norwegian" to be able to follow the ordinary teaching (Regulations to the Norwegian Education Act 1999, Section 24-1). To ensure adjusted minority tuition, the government provides grants to municipalities that incur extra expenses in connection with the education of pupils whose mother tongue is not Norwegian or Sami. The regional National Education Offices offer assistance to municipalities by providing information on minority education and also ensure the provision of adequate tuition for language minority pupils.

The subject Norwegian as a second language (NL2) is Norwegian tuition adjusted for pupils whose mother tongue is not Norwegian or Sami (Regulations to the Norwegian Education Act 1999, Section 24-1). In addition to the regular *L97* Norwegian syllabus, a special syllabus for teaching NL2 to minority pupils was published in 1998, hereafter referred to as *Norsk som andrespråk for språklige minoriteter* (1998). The syllabus emphasises that language learning occurs in interaction with others, but at the same time, it calls attention to the importance of systematic and continuous work on oral and written skills as a basis for active learning and development. It is the minority parents who, in agreement with the teacher and/or school, decide whether the pupil will follow the ordinary syllabus in Norwegian or in NL2. When language minority pupils have acquired sufficient knowledge of Norwegian to follow the ordinary teaching, they should be transferred to the regular Norwegian tuition. Otherwise, they can sit the examination in NL2. The

grade in the subject will count as much as the grade in Norwegian when applying for upper secondary education.

At the time of the project and according to the Regulations to the Norwegian Education Act (1999), municipalities should offer mother tongue instruction to language minority pupils who do not have an adequate knowledge of the Norwegian language. Mother tongue instruction will primarily be provided to minority pupils in grades one to four in connection to the first reading and writing tuition, but can, if necessary, continue during the remaining compulsory school years. At the lower secondary level, schools can offer minority pupils mother tongue education as an optional additional subject (Stortingsmelding no. 25 1998). Language minority pupils may be taught their mother tongue both as a subject and as a medium for instruction. The mother tongue training should preferably be in addition to the pupil's usual school day, while the bilingual subject teaching is supposed to be an integral part of the ordinary teaching (Stortingsmelding 1998). A separate syllabus for mother-tongue instruction, entitled *Morsmål for språklige minoriteter*, was available from the Internet in 2001, and in print in 2002. Like the L97 syllabuses for language subjects, it stresses that language learning is not just a training of skills, but also the formation, socialisation, and development of linguistic and cultural consciousness.

The organisation of minority tuition is decided on the municipal level. It is to a great extent based on the allocation of government grants, which depend on both the number of pupils and the number of mother tongues represented at each school (Rundskriv 2001). Only minority pupils participating in the instruction of NL2 are entitled to government grants for mother tongue tuition. The school finally decides the number of periods to be allocated to mother tongue instruction. Mother tongue tuition can therefore differ in organisation from municipality to municipality, and from school to school (see Chapter 16).

In 2003 the municipalities' obligations concerning special tuition for language minority pupils were included in the Education Act. In 2004 the earlier formulations in the Regulations to the Norwegian Education Act (1999) were changed.

## Chapter 9

### The school, the teachers, and the pupils

The research school, *Ekelund*, is an urban primary school situated in Norway's capital Oslo. The school is located in what used to be a typical industrial neighbourhood with a population primarily composed of factory workers. Urban renewal and modern blocks of flats currently characterise the neighbourhood. About one-third of the population in this part of town consists of immigrants from non-western countries. The neighbourhood's present population is rather heterogeneous, both socially and culturally.

Like most Norwegian primary schools, *Ekelund* is a public school. It is a school for grades one to seven, with nearly 400 pupils in the school year 1999/2000. The school had sixteen classes and about forty teachers (form teachers and subject teachers) employed that year. Additionally, there were another twenty staff members working in the after-school-programme, the library, the administration, and the cleaning division. Every grade had, in addition to its own classroom, access to another classroom to be used for various activities, such as the NL2 lessons.

In 1999, approximately 45 per cent of *Ekelund's* pupils were registered as language minority pupils, and about 25 different mother tongues were recorded. Urdu was by far the most frequent registered mother tongue, followed by Albanian, Somali, Panjabi, and Tamil (ranked according to their frequency). During the school year 1999/2000, *Ekelund* had two mother tongue teachers, one Urdu-Norwegian and one Somali-Norwegian teacher. The multicultural character of *Ekelund* is acknowledged in some of the school documents, including the school's action plan for the year 2000. To emphasise the school's multilingual environment, the weekly lesson called School's and Pupil's Options was spent on a joint language learning programme for grades one to four over a period of five weeks during spring 2000. The pupils could make a choice out of seven different languages, including Arabic, Danish, French, Italian, Somali, Spanish, and Urdu. During these weeks, the children learnt some basic words and expressions, and a song in the language of their choice.

Class 3A, the research class, is one of two parallel classes of the school's third grade. This third grade belongs to the first group of pupils who started schooling at the age of six, due to the educational reform in 1997. The first year at school is more like pre-school education – the children are supposed to get only preparatory training in reading and writing. Systematic reading and writing teaching does not start until the second grade. This means that the pupils we observed in the third grade are in their second year of learning to read and write.

Class 3A had more teachers than what is common in other *Ekelund* classes. This is partly due to the fact that the form teacher also taught another grade as an Arts and Crafts teacher. Karin, the form teacher, had more than twenty years of teaching experience. She had been employed at *Ekelund* for about ten years and had been 3A's form teacher since the second grade. She taught them for sixteen periods a week: NL2 (six periods), Math (four periods), Social Studies (two periods), Arts and Crafts (two periods), music (one period), and school and pupil options (one period). Karin had attended courses in NL2, and she also had other relevant further education. Jon, the co-teacher, was a young and recent graduate from the Teacher Training College. He taught class 3A for thirteen periods per week: NL1 (seven periods), Science and the Environment (two periods), Physical Education (two periods), English (one period), and Free Activities (one period). Besides being a teacher in 3A, Jon also co-taught class 3B. Tore, a young university-educated teacher, took the class for the subject Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education (CRE) for two periods a week. Nasreen, the Urdu-Norwegian teacher, taught various 3A pupils for six periods a week. She had two separate Urdu lessons with the Urdu-speaking pupils in 3A. The remaining resources were used in a rather flexible way and differed over the year. At first, Nasreen assisted Jon and Karin in their classroom teaching. Later on, when the class was split in two during math lessons, she taught one of the groups. Hassan, the Somali-Norwegian teacher, was allocated three periods a week in 3A in order to teach a girl with a Somali background. She is a pupil with special educational needs and he usually took her out of the class for separate tuition, which was given in either Somali or Norwegian. Kine was a young teaching assistant assigned to a minority pupil with rather serious learning disabilities. She helped him during the lessons or took him out of the classroom for separate tuition. Niklas was one of the replacement teachers, standing in for other teachers when required.

The pupils in class 3A were born in 1991, which means that they were approximately eight years old when our classroom recordings started autumn 1999. At that time, 23 children, 9 boys and 14 girls, were registered as pupils in Class 3A, though one of the boys was absent since he and his family were on a six-week visit in the country of his parents' origin. In January 2000, another pupil joined the class, a boy with a minority background and rather serious learning disabilities. He was a pupil in class 3A, but spent most of the time on his own program, with the help of Kine, the teaching assistant.

Eleven of the 24 pupils in class 3A have Norwegian as their first language, while thirteen pupils have Norwegian as their second language and are registered by the school as language minority pupils. Besides Norwegian, nine other mother tongues are represented in the class: Albanian, Arabic (three pupils), Croatian, Hindi, Mandingo, Panjabi, Somali, Turkish, and Urdu (three pupils). Ten of the thirteen minority pupils were born in Norway, while three of them had lived in Norway for only a few years. Twelve minority pupils participated in the NL2 lessons; one minority pupil followed the NL1 lessons.

The timetable (see Figure 3.1) shows seven periods of Norwegian per week; in six of these periods, the pupils attend separate Norwegian classes. The form teacher teaches NL2, while the co-teacher takes the NL1 lessons. In other grades, it is usually the form teacher who teaches NL1, but in class 3A, the form teacher is of the opinion that any teacher can teach NL1, but that one needs special competence to teach NL2. The timetable is to a great extent followed. The high number of teachers affiliated with this class constrains the freedom to change the schedule.

A set of tests given, within the research project, to all the pupils in 3A (except for one who had serious learning disabilities) shows that the Norwegian language competence of the majority pupils is clearly better than that of the minority group. With regard to oral language competence, information was gathered both in relation to their vocabulary and their grammatical knowledge, as well as their expressive and receptive abilities. In addition, the pupils' reading performance and their ability to handle information by means of the Norwegian language was evaluated.

<i>Monday</i>	
08.50 - 10.20	Norwegian as a First Language (Jon) Norwegian as a Second Language (Karin)
10.20 - 10.45	Break
10.45 - 11.30	Mathematics (Karin)
11.30 - 12.15	Science and the Environment (Jon)
12.15 - 12.45	Break
12.45 - 13.30	Science and the Environment (Jon, Nasreen)
13.30 - 14.15	Free Activities (Jon, Hassan)
<i>Tuesday</i>	
08.50 - 10.20	Mathematics (Karin, Nasreen)
10.20 - 10.45	Break
10.45 - 12.15	Arts and Crafts (Karin)
12.15 - 12.45	Break
12.45 - 13.30	Urdu (Nasreen)
<i>Wednesday</i>	
08.50 - 09.35	English (Jon)
09.35 - 10.20	Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education (Tore)
10.45 - 11.30	Social Studies (Karin)
11.30 - 12.15	Norwegian as a First Language (Jon) Norwegian as a Second Language (Karin)
12.15 - 12.45	Break
12.45 - 13.30	Norwegian as a First Language (Jon) Norwegian as a Second Language (Karin, Hassan)
<i>Thursday</i>	
08.50 - 09.35	Mathematics (Karin, Nasreen)
09.35 - 11.30	Physical Education (Jon)
11.30 - 12.15	Music (Karin)
12.45 - 13.30	School's and Pupil's Options (Karin, Hassan)
<i>Friday</i>	
08.50 - 10.20	Norwegian as a First Language (Jon) Norwegian as a Second Language (Karin)
10.20 - 10.45	Break
10.45 - 11.30	Norwegian (Jon)
11.30 - 12.15	Social Studies (Karin)
12.45 - 13.30	Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education (Tore)

Figure 3.1: Timetable of Class 3A of *Ekelund*

The results of the oral language tests show a rather consistent picture. When ranking the pupils, majority pupils come first followed by those with a minority background, with the exception of two majority pupils who performed within the range of the minority pupils. When it comes to the results of the reading and information tests, the comparison between minority and majority pupils is not so easy, however. Although the average performance of the majority pupils is also better in this case, the ranking of majority and minority pupils is more complex. When it comes

to information, the best minority pupil ranked a shared third among all the pupils in 3A. In reading, a minority pupil came out on top and the two weakest pupils were majority pupils.





## Chapter 10

### Content and form of education in the case study class

In this section, we describe the important characteristics of the content and form of education in the case study class as they relate to language development. The description is based on all our knowledge of the class, but the examples given come from the first week following the autumn holiday in 1999. At relevant points, references will be given to the more detailed studies of selected episodes presented in Chapters 11-15. Some of these episodes come from this same week, while other episodes come from other times of the year.

Language learning is multidimensional. The children should learn language in its oral and written forms, in listening and speaking, reading and writing. The L97 curriculum in part also uses these four language functions to structure the learning targets in both NL1 and NL2 (Curriculum 1999; *Norsk som andrespråk for språklige minoriteter* 1998). In addition, it is stressed in the curriculum that linguistic variety and a range of genres should be important elements of education (Curriculum 1999:125). In accordance with these guidelines, the use of language in this class was characterised by great variation in different oral and written genres and tasks. During the autumn week in question, the children sang a lot and worked with rhymes and jingles. They listened to, told, read and wrote stories. They also used the written medium in more formal ways in dictations and copying of written texts. They received and gave information as part of classroom management and as part of the communication of the thematic content of the lessons. They expressed opinions and argued with the teachers. They talked while playing and often talked while working or changing activities.

A very frequent activity in this class is singing. During the lessons in which all the children were taught together, they sang approximately five songs a day in this week and an additional two in the NL2 lessons. Every morning they started with a song. The form teacher, Karin, is the one who in particular is fond of singing. She easily picked up her guitar and started a song, most often one chosen by her, but also following suggestions from the children. They sang different kinds of songs, for example,

old traditional Norwegian songs, songs from popular stories for children, songs introducing or related to the more specific thematic content of the lesson (Chapters 11 and 15), local 'patriotic' songs, and songs where movements are an integral part. The variety of songs did not seem to mirror the multicultural composition of the class, however. Both the teacher and the children seemed to enjoy the playful singing and movements a lot. Thus, singing is an integral part of many different activities in this class as the thematic content of the lessons, play, and 'local' identity formation. Singing is also related to reading. At the suggestion of some of the girls, the teacher had made a songbook for the class with the songs most frequently used. Singing may, furthermore, be related to reading through rhyming, which may be considered a metalinguistic task (Olaussen 1996).

Different kind of stories were a recurrent genre in the work of this class in both the oral and written mode, in listening and telling, reading and writing. The children encountered different written stories in the oral mode when they listened to a teacher reading to them. They listened to the reading aloud of the reading lesson they were given for homework as preparation for their own reading practice. During lunchtime, the teacher in charge often read fiction books for children to them. Sometimes also the children themselves brought books to school which were read to them, for example, in the NL2 lesson. A story was also read to the children during the two lessons on Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education in this particular week. The same story was actually read twice by two different substitute teachers. The story came from the textbook, *Broene* (Bakken, Bakken & Haug 1998), which means 'the bridges'. There was great variation in the language complexity of the stories the children encountered. The story from *Broene* is very difficult, and the incidental repetition seems fortunate since a number of children gave clear signals that they did not understand the story even after the second reading. The reading lessons, on the other hand, were very simple, owing to the fact that the children were at an early stage in their second year of formal reading instruction at the time of observation. The other texts were somewhere in between. When listening to the teachers' reading, this class sometimes became rather restless, possibly because of problems in the adjustment of the texts to the children's language competence. Karin actually gave up reading to them during lunchtime one day, and the first substitute teacher of Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education used much of

her time to scold the children in an attempt to ensure silence and concentration.

The children were also invited to tell personal stories. Thus, on the first day back after the autumn holiday, the children were asked to tell the class what they had done during their free time. Karin organised turn taking in a way she often used when she wanted to be in control – by pulling nametags from a little tin cup. Karin gave the children some suggestions of what kind of information to share such as what they had done, where they had been or what they had read. The longest story was told by an outspoken and rather active language majority girl who eagerly told about a trip to Copenhagen. Most of the other children had rather little to tell, however, and Karin tried to encourage them further with some additional questions. This telling episode started out in the regular class and continued for the language minority pupils in their separate NL2 lesson. Although they were given opportunities to tell their stories when everybody was together, Karin challenged them once more in this smaller group, and some additional information was presented.

When it comes to the written mode, the children often had to read stories read to them earlier by others. This was, of course, the case with their homework reading lessons. They were also invited to read the story in their Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education textbook, although it was too difficult to read for many of the children in the class. In addition, the children read stories they had written themselves. The language minority children had free writing as homework once a week. Karin indicated that preferably the children should make up their own stories, but copying other written material, for example, from their reading lessons, was also acceptable, especially at this early time of the year. These stories were read aloud in class by the children, or, sometimes, by the teacher. The invented stories are often rather short, but they are meaningful and sometimes follow a fairy tale formula.

Orthographic or other language mistakes in these stories were not corrected. The teacher's comments were of a much more general nature: that they should try to write longer stories, that they should try to invent a story by themselves if they had just been copying, and so on. To write correctly, and also neatly, is of importance in other written tasks, however. Thus, once a week they also had a dictation. Karin presented four words, all from their homework reading lesson. After the children had handed in their dictations to Karin, she wrote the words on the blackboard. The children were very attentive and commented aloud on

how they managed. Karin also immediately checked the children's dictations and commented directly on some of their mistakes, for example, that one cannot start with two identical letters in Norwegian words. When one of the boys wrote *ta* (take) as *tha*, she said that she might have pronounced it in that way. She concluded with evaluations such as "three right", "everything right". Copying written texts was also part of working with different topics. Thus, working with rhyming also included, as homework, copying short verses as beautifully as possible and copying pairs of rhyming words written on the blackboard.

Another type of communication repeatedly observed in this class was negotiation and argumentation. The classroom atmosphere allowed and supported this kind of language interaction that often was initiated by the children themselves. In a Physical Education lesson, for example, some of the girls clearly spoke out against the content of the lessons which, in their opinion, consisted of too many "boy things". Jon, the teacher in charge of these lessons, then and there started a short discussion with the children about the content. Furthermore, the next day in the only Norwegian lesson in which all the pupils participate together, he invited the children to write down what they would like to do in their Physical Education lessons. When writing down their wishes, some of the children asked Jon how the word for a preferred activity should be written. The theme 'boy things' also popped up in a lesson with Karin. She challenged the girls when they called something "boy things". She said they could not just say they did not like 'boy things'. They had to describe the activity they did not like in a more direct way. The sensitivity to the children's points of view was also exemplified in another discussion with Karin. At lunchtime one day, the children initiated a discussion of rules concerning a special game they play at this school. Karin listened attentively to the pupils' opinions and presented her own which actually differed from theirs. She did not overrule the children, however, but suggested that they should find the teachers in charge of this special game at the school and suggest to them that the rules ought to be changed. The topics of argumentation varied and sometimes also included the more specific subject content of the lesson. Such an episode, initiated by the children, is reported in Chapter 12. This event, however, was observed in spring and not in the autumn week in special focus. Karin also often asked the children direct questions in areas where they were supposed to have relevant information. Thus, in this classroom, many questions from teacher to pupils are authentic and not just test

questions where the teacher already knows the answers (Nystrand 1997). In this way, the independence and the authority of the children are appreciated and supported.

Language is used for communication, but it can also be the focus in different kinds of metalinguistic tasks in which attention is shifted from the content of communication to the language medium as such. The attention may, in these cases, be directed towards different aspects of linguistic behaviour such as phonology, morphology, syntax, or vocabulary, towards orthography or other parts of the relationship between oral and written language, or towards aspects of a bilingual competence. In accordance with the curriculum for the lower primary grades, morphology and syntax were given little attention at all by Karin during this week. The same is true for the other times of observation. Word meaning generally received somewhat more attention, but there were almost no formal learning episodes during this week in which this language aspect was the primary target. Word meaning was given attention more informally, in the flow of other activities, so to speak, e.g., when the teachers explained difficult words that appeared in the textbooks or when the children took the initiative to have words explained to them or in other ways showed that they did not understand. For example, when singing a song about a little pussycat that has been naughty and gets a smack on its tail by its mother, one of the language minority children misunderstood the word *ris* (spank) and wondered if the pussycat got a *gris* (pig) on its tail. Karin then explained the word *ris* to the children. Karin also talked about the meaning of *regne* that turned up in a rhyming task. In Norwegian, this word can both mean 'do arithmetic' and 'rain'. Some other words were also explained, but explanations of the meaning of words were not frequent in Karin's lessons. Several words which the language minority children probably did not understand were ignored. A special discussion of the lack of focus on word meaning in mathematics lessons is presented in Chapter 15. In the Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education lessons, some difficult words such as *førstefødselsretten* (right of primogeniture) and *minnestein* (monumental stone) were being talked about by the substitute teachers.

In one lesson during this week, however, vocabulary and word meaning were highly emphasised. This was the English lesson in which an important theme was English words for colours. These words were worked on in different ways, the main objective being to strengthen the associations between colour names and the colours themselves. Thus, the

teaching of vocabulary seems to differ when English is to be learned as a foreign language and when Norwegian is to be learned as a second language.

It should be noted at this point, however, that word meanings are learned in different ways, and not only when they are explicitly focused on. Word meanings can also be acquired through the language context in which the words are included and through the labelling of present objects (Jenkins & Dixon 1983). When it comes to the latter, it is interesting to see that Karin sometimes brought concrete objects to the classroom. During this particular week, she brought lobster claws from her own autumn holiday with her, asking the children if they knew what they were. Some of the movement songs also included direct associations between words and their referents, for example, *Hode, skulder, kne og tå* (head, shoulder, knee, and toe), requiring the children to touch the body parts mentioned when singing. This topic, the learning of words in the context of their concrete references, is further discussed in Chapter 13.

Let us go back to the discussion of metalinguistic tasks, however. A number of tasks this week focused on the relationship between oral and written language by requiring analyses of the stream of language into separate sounds and/or the mapping of sounds to letters. Rhyming was, for example, a recurrent topic during this week, and the children worked on rhyming in different ways, both at school and in their homework (Chapter 11). Rhyming work is believed to enhance the children's phonological awareness and thus also their literacy development (Olaussen 1996). In addition, orthographic tasks require specific attention to the relationship between oral and written language. This is the case with dictation and, of course, also when the children themselves ask how words are to be written. Tasks of this kind may also be included in playful competition, for instance, when the children in the NL2 lesson were asked to write down as many girls' or boys' names starting with a given letter as possible.

Language learning is related to the opportunities children are given both to hear and use the target language. The organisation of education is related to such opportunities and is thus of importance when language learning is considered (Wong Fillmore 1994). The organisation of education in this classroom varied between teacher-led activities and more individual tasks with different degrees of teacher follow up. In the mathematics lessons, individual work was rather frequent, with little time spent on whole class teaching. Different kinds of drawing, colouring, and

craft tasks, frequently observed in this class, were also performed individually, but most of the other activities were whole class activities. On some few occasions, pairs of pupils were asked to work together, and there were also examples of more spontaneous group formation, for example, during play episodes (see Chapter 12). More formally organised group work was not observed. It should be noted, however, that the notion 'whole class' in this connection is ambiguous. It sometimes refers to the whole regular class, sometimes to the whole group in the NL2 lessons. This should remind us of a basic organisational characteristic of this class. For six out of seven lessons in Norwegian a week, the language minority and majority children are educated in separate groups. In the language minority group, the only native speaker of Norwegian is the teacher.

It is generally accepted that the learning of a second language is greatly influenced by affective and motivational factors (McLaughlin 1989). The attitude of the school and its teachers towards the mother tongues of the children and their family and background more broadly is important in this connection. Karin is very positive towards the children's mother tongues and presents an open and inviting attitude towards their families. In cooperation with the Urdu mother tongue teacher, she works actively to strengthen the mother tongue education at the school (see Chapter 16). There were also some occasions in the NL2 class during this week where the use of mother tongues was clearly encouraged. One of the homework tasks for this week was to ask their mother or another person to teach them a jingle, and some jingles in the language minority children's mother tongues were presented to the NL2 class. On another occasion, Karin encouraged the children to count in their mother tongues. The following small episode is also interesting in this connection. One of the minority pupils who had been living in Norway for only a few years, told Karin that she is now better in Norwegian than is her mother. Karin agreed, but she added that her mother still is better in their common mother tongue than she is. With this answer Karin communicated the positive value she attaches to competence in the mother tongue. Karin also encouraged the parents or other relatives of the language majority and minority children to come and visit them at school, and she suggested schedules for when different parents could come and visit the class.

This third grade multicultural class was a rather lively one, and sometimes the atmosphere of the class resembled that of a preschool.



There was much talking and movement, much play and joy, and a great deal of noise. Art and craft components were often included in the educational tasks, and there were often practical matters going on, such as hanging up pictures, going to the library, being given information for parents, and so on. The children often talked without explicitly being given the floor by the teacher. The form teacher, Karin, likes the children to be active and independent, and actually had good control. When she wished the children to calm down, she, on most occasions, had both the authority and strategies to manage that. When she was not in the classroom, however, activities could go out of control.

## Chapter 11

# Norwegian as a first and second language lessons: classroom discourse as educational practice

### 11.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with classroom discourse as educational practice. It examines how the topic of rhyming is introduced to the pupils in class 3A in the separate NL1 and NL2 lessons. Excerpts of teacher-directed classroom discourse are presented, discussed, and compared by relating to both the structure and content of the episodes.

The Norwegian compulsory school curriculum, *Læreplan* 97 (Curriculum 1999), emphasises classroom discourse as both a means of working and learning in nearly all its subjects, but especially in the Norwegian language lessons. In addition, the curriculum for NL2, *Norsk som andrespråk for språklige minoriteter* (1998), aims at enabling language minority pupils to participate actively in classroom discourse. Furthermore, international research on first and second language learning indicates that pupils' active participation in classroom discourse facilitates language learning in general and second language learning in particular.

Within the field of education, there is wide agreement on the importance of spoken language in the educational process, but what does 'classroom discourse' stand for, and how can it be studied and understood in relation to its language learning potential? Cazden's classic *Classroom Discourse* (1988) is subtitled *The Language of Teaching and Learning*. But is all classroom discourse a language of teaching and learning? Later, Cazden (1998) emphasised that there are actually two kinds of discourse: discourse as communication and discourse as instruction, which are interconnected in the classroom. Classroom discourse as communication is the language used to carry out the social life of the classroom, much like everyday discourse, while discourse as instruction is educational discourse, i.e., the language of teaching and learning.

Several educational researchers argue that the participation structure, i.e., who participates with what, and when and how, in classroom discourse determines what learning opportunities become available to the participants. In addition, it is widely documented that the basic discourse structure in traditional teacher-led instruction is the IRE-sequence consisting of a teacher's initiation, often a question, a pupil's response, and the teacher's evaluation of the pupil's response (Cazden 1988; Mehan 1979). Classroom discourse dominated by IRE sequences might be functionally effective, but offers only limited opportunities for the pupils to participate actively and rarely gives them a chance to come up with extended responses. An alternative discourse pattern is the IRF sequence (Wells 1993), where the 'F' refers to 'Follow-up'. Instead of just evaluating pupils' answer in the third move, the teacher takes the opportunity to follow up and extend pupils' answers, a teaching strategy that both sustains the classroom discourse and affects its qualitative aspects.

Johnson (1995), aiming at a more holistic approach, demonstrated that classroom discourse patterns are governed by both social participation structures, i.e., how turn taking shapes the discourse and academic task structures, i.e., how the subject matter is presented and related, the sequential steps involved, et cetera. When we want to study classroom discourse as educational discourse, it is thus important to identify both its structure and the educational content embedded in these structures. To be able to identify, discuss, and compare the educational dimensions of classroom discourse, we need an analytical framework conceptualising these qualitative dimensions. In the same way as the social-interactive dimensions of classroom discourse can be examined by constructs as participation structure and IRE sequences, a sociocultural framework is suggested here as an appropriate tool to explore the educational dimensions of the discourse.

The sociocultural approach, building on the perspectives of Vygotsky (1967, 1978) and Bakhtin (1981, 1986), emphasises the central role interaction, language, and dialogue play in children's learning and development and can thus provide useful insights into the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms.

According to Nystrand (1997), who applied Bakhtinian constructs to teaching in language classrooms, dialogic devices decisive for learning seem to be: authentic, i.e., open-ended questions; high-level evaluation, referring to an appreciative and substantial response to pupils' contribu-

tions; and uptake, i.e., following up pupils' responses in the subsequent discourse. In addition, Vygotskian concepts such as joint attention, scaffolding, and zone of proximal development are relevant in order to discuss the pedagogical practices observed during classroom discourse.

These sociocultural concepts will be applied to conceptualise the educational dimensions of the discourse sequences in order to explore how the subject knowledge is presented in the two lessons on rhyming and to compare the opportunities this creates for active pupil participation in classroom discourse. When discussing the excerpts of classroom discourse, the relevant concepts will be further discussed and illustrated.

## **11.2 Rhyming in the Norwegian as a first language class**

It is Monday, 4 October 1999, the first day after the autumn holiday. The first lessons on the time schedule for today are two Norwegian lessons. Jon takes the regular Norwegian lessons (NL1), and Karin teaches the NL2 pupils. The two Norwegian teachers and their pupils first gather in the regular classroom where Karin, the form teacher, takes the lead. As usual, the pupils start the day by singing some songs and then Karin invites them to tell about their autumn holiday experiences.

After about 15 minutes of the lesson have passed, sheets for this week's homework are handed out, listing the daily assignments the pupils have to work on at home. It shows that for the Norwegian lesson on Wednesday, the pupils have to do a number of tasks related to rhyming. They have to read 'Rhyme and verse' on page 30 and 31 of their Norwegian language book *Språket ditt* (Bech, Heggem & Kverndokken 1998), which means 'your language'. Then they have to write two of the verses in their exercise book, and find some rhyming words. Karin tells the class that "there is Norwegian on our timetable, so some of you will have to go to the room next door". Now the class parts company. Jon stays behind to teach the NL1 group and Karin follows her NL2 pupils out of the classroom.

The nine pupils staying behind with Jon all have Norwegian as their only home language, except for Sona. Many of the NL1 pupils leave their seats when the class breaks up and fool around the classroom. Jon tells them to be seated. One of the pupils wonders whether they can carry on with a game called "The king commands" they had played before the

autumn holiday. Jon answers that they will now have Norwegian. After some pupil talk on having Norwegian and being Norwegian, the rhyming lesson starts. In the following episode, the turns are numbered.

Episode 3.1: Does anybody know what rhyme is?

Teacher: Does anybody know what rhyme is?

1 *Er det noen som vet hva rim er for noe?*

Michael: Yes. That is something that rhymes.

2 *Ja. Det er noe som rimer.*

Pupil: Yes. Rhymes.

3 *Ja. Rimer.*

Teacher: What does it do then?

4 *Hva gjør det for noe da?*

Michael: xxx like a poem.

5 *xxx som dikt.*

Teacher: Is there anybody who can explain why a rhyme is a rhyme? If I say uh is there anything that rhymes with queue queue, if I say for example "I am sitting in a *kø* (queue)".

6 *Er det noen som kan forklare hvorfor et rim er et rim? Hvis jeg sier eh er det noe som rimer på *kø kjø*, hvis jeg sier for eksempel "*jeg sitter i kjø*".*

Sona: (Raises her hand).

Teacher: Sona?

7 *Sona?*

Sona: \**Nø, nø.*

8 *Nø, nø.*

Teacher: Yes. Did you hear that, Michael?

9 *Ja. Hørte du det Michael?*

Teacher: If I say, "The sky is clear and blue" (example borrowed from 'Rhyme and Verse' in the textbook), can you make a sentence that rhymes?

10 *Hvis jeg sier, "*himmelen er klar og blå*", kan dere lage en setning som rimer på det?*

Michael: Yes. The sky is not clear and blue.

11 *Ja. Himmelen er ikke klar og blå.*

Pupils: (Laugh, one repeats the answer, and nearly all turn and look at Michael, sitting at the back).

Pupil: The sky is not clear and blue.

12 *Himmelen er ikke klar og blå.*

- Ida: That does not actually rhyme xxx.  
 13 *Det rimer ikke da xxx.*
- Pupils: (Become restless).
- Pupil: The sky is *blå* (blue) xxx *storetå* (big toe).  
 14 *Himmelen er blå xxx storetå.*
- Pupils: (Laugh loudly).
- Silje: What did you say again? (clarification request directed to Jon).  
 15 *Hva sa du igjen?*
- Teacher: The sky is clear and *blå* (blue).  
 16 *Himmelen er klar og blå.*
- Pupil: Suddenly it turns completely *grå* (grey).  
 17 *Plutselig så blir den helt grå.*
- Teacher: Good. That rhymes xxx.  
 18 *Bra. Det rimte xxx.*
- Pupils: (Laugh and shout in the background).
- Teacher: If I say, “the sky is clear and *høy* (high)” (borrowed from the verse in the textbook).  
 19 *Hvis jeg sier, “himmelen er klar og høy”.*
- Pupil: *Møy, gøy* (maiden, fun), a lot of fun.  
 20 *Møy, gøy, veldig gøy.*
- Teacher: Good.  
 21 *Bra.*

Jon continues to elicit the completion of a few more sentences taken from the verses in the Norwegian language book, but he experiences difficulties in catching the children’s attention. Then he tells the pupils to pick up their books and look up ‘Rhyme and verse’ on page thirty. Every pupil alternately reads aloud one of the nine verses, the first one being:

The sky is clear and blue.  
*Himmelen er klar og blå.*  
 Your nose has freckles on it.  
*Nesen din har fregner på.*

When it is Silje’s turn, she comes up with a flippant improvisation of the rhyming sentence in the book and Jon immediately responds with another rhyme:

- Silje: The sky is clear and *høy* (high) and Jon does not want to wear *tøy* (clothes).  
*Himmelen er klar og høy og Jon vil ikke å ha på seg tøy.*
- Teacher: And Jon does not like *støy* (noise).  
*Og Jon liker ikke støy.*

When the pupils have finished reading the verses, there are some discussions regarding some rhyming words. Next, Jon reads a rhyme on a piglet from the same book. Then he asks the pupils to start on the book's first writing task in relation to 'Rhyme and verse', i.e., writing down the rhyming words of each verse. The children start working individually on their tasks. Jon circulates through the classroom, pausing at certain tables, looking at pupils' work, and providing assistance when needed.

The discourse excerpt of the NL1 lesson shows a social participation structure characteristic of traditional, teacher-led whole-class instruction, a classroom discourse dominated by IRE sequences. In Table 3.1, the turns in the episode are characterised in terms of initiation, response, evaluation, or follow-up and in terms of the speaker (teacher or pupil). Table 3.2 indicates the frequency of occurrence of the types of turns used in the excerpt.

The tables show that out of the 21 turns in the excerpt, 10 were teacher turns and 11 were pupil turns. The teacher did not nominate pupils to answer his questions. Consequently, the pupils could participate in the discourse as they liked. The pupils' responses were rather short, and the teacher did not really encourage the pupils to extend their contributions to the discourse. There was only one follow-up. Five out of ten teacher turns were initiations by means of 'display' or 'known information questions', i.e., questions to which the teacher already knows the answer, in contrast to authentic questions. Nine of the eleven pupil turns were relatively short responses, individual attempts to answer the teacher's questions, but the pupils were not actively participating in the discourse otherwise.

Turn	Type	Speaker
1	initiation	teacher
2-3	response	pupil
4	follow-up	teacher
5	response	pupil
6	initiation	teacher
7	response	teacher
8	response	pupil
9	evaluation	teacher
10	initiation	teacher
11-12	response	pupil
13	evaluation	pupil
14	response	pupil
15	initiation	pupil
16	initiation	teacher
17	response	pupil
18	evaluation	teacher
19	initiation	teacher
20	response	pupil
21	evaluation	teacher

Table 3.1: Turn types in Episode 3.1

Type of turn	Teacher	Pupil
Initiation	5	1
Response	1	9
Evaluation	3	1
Follow-up	1	0

Table 3.2: Frequency of occurrence of types of turns in Episode 3.1

What about the academic task structure of the NL1 rhyming lesson, i.e., how was the subject matter presented and sequenced? Jon initiated his rhyming lesson with a question-elicitation, asking the pupils whether they knew what a rhyme is. The teacher asked the pupils to tell what a rhyme was in a context-free setting. The question sounded open at first, but it soon became clear that it was a display question, asking pupils to demonstrate a special kind of knowledge. Display questions rarely lead to a sustained classroom discourse since they neither encourage pupils to make elaborated responses nor do they encourage them to introduce new topics. In Turn 2 and 3, two of the pupils answered that rhyming is “something that rhymes”, and Jon followed up their answers by asking



them “What does it do then?” When Michael (Turn 5) then tried to explain rhyming by referring to ‘a poem’, a context-dependent explanation of rhyming, his response was ignored. Jon gave another initiation and, by doing this, he implicitly rejected Michael’s response as incorrect.

Jon chose to proceed with the conversation on rhyming, and asked why a rhyme is a rhyme. But, immediately after, he asked for concrete examples of rhyming by presenting “queue, queue”, as an explicit cue (Turn 6). The cue can be regarded as a preformulation, a kind of scaffold, and it worked, for now Sona came with a response Jon approved of: “nueue, nueue” (which are just nonsense words). Jon acknowledged her contribution with “Yes”, a short positive evaluation, and emphasised that this was the right answer by explicitly calling Michael’s attention to it (Turn 9).

Then the teacher continued the discourse by asking the pupils whether they could make a sentence rhyming with “The sky is clear and blue” (Turn 11). Michael responded by making a negative construction instead: “The sky is *not* clear and blue”. It was obvious that Michael (intentionally or not) misinterpreted the academic task, and Jon ignored his answer. But one of the other pupils, Ida, came with an evaluation of Michael’s response and commented that it did not rhyme (Turn 13). Jon did not acknowledge Ida’s response either and carried on the conversation by repeating his last question. The teacher’s reinitiation indicated to the pupils that the response was not correct or at least did not fit in into the discussion he had in mind. Not picking up on the direction of pupil talk makes pupils’ involvement more difficult, and this might be the reason the class got restless after some time. Michael’s response in Turn 11 might also be a result of Jon’s ignoring his contribution (Turn 5). The teacher’s rather narrow set of evaluations, only commenting “good” when the pupils came up with a correct answer, did not promote further elaboration by the pupils.

Initially the children seemed to have difficulties understanding the academic task structure the teacher had in mind. It was not until the end of the excerpt that a shared understanding was established and a joint construction of knowledge was achieved (Turn 16-21). Jon’s initial problem in establishing a common understanding of the rhyming task might be the result of the fact that the rhyming did not occur within a meaningful, authentic context, only isolated ‘chunks’ of rhyming sentences were presented. The teacher relied solely on verbal question-elicitations in his attempt to establish a joint focus of attention. Later,

when the children picked up their books and read the verses, they participated more actively in the classroom discourse and some spontaneous incidents of rhyming occurred. Also, Jon's way of participating was different then. His response to pupils' contributions, such as Silje's flip-pant improvisation, made the classroom discourse more dialogical.

Though the social participation structure in this excerpt was relaxed, the teacher-pupil interaction can be characterised as teacher-directed and rather tightly controlled in so far as the academic tasks are concerned. This might be a tactic for getting through, enabling the lesson to proceed as planned, or the teacher may have wanted to exert greater control over the interactional patterns during the oral discourse part of the lesson in order to ensure that the pupils understood what rhyming is about when individually carrying out the follow-up writing task on rhyming later on.

### 11.3 Rhyming in the Norwegian as a second language class

Karin starts her lesson by going over the reading lesson for the week. The teacher and the pupils jointly read aloud the reading exercise, which is about a girl who gets a kitten. Karin proceeds by asking the children whether they remember the song about the pussycat. Ayse answers immediately that she knows it. Then Karin starts singing a song called *Lille kattepus* (Little pussycat) and the children join her immediately.

After a while, Karin finds another song in *Leseboka* (Kverndokken 1993), called *Gåteviser* (Riddle Song), which was written by Thorbjørn Egner (1912-1990), a popular writer of children's books in Norway. She tells the pupils to look up the song on page 92, where they can find both the text and colourful illustrations accompanying it. The Riddle Song has four verses with eight riddles. Karin starts singing the first verse. The pupils join her cautiously, getting more hold on it after a while (T & ps = teacher and pupils):

Episode 3.2: When the last letters are alike, it rhymes

T & ps:      Who has fur so fine and soft, and goes hunting at night, and  
                  likes milk and honey and porridge? Yes, that is ...  
                  *Hvem har pels så fin og bløt, og går på jakt om natten, og*  
                  *liker melk og honning og grøt? Jo, det er ...*

- Pupils: The cat!  
*Katten!*
- T & ps: And who is tiny and sweet, and very afraid of pussy, but loves  
pork and cheese and meat? Yes, that is ...  
*Og hvem er bitte liten og søt, og veldig redd for pusen, men  
glad i flesk og ost og kjøtt? Jo, det er ...*
- Pupils: The mouse!  
*Musen!*

The children complete the riddles in the various verses on their own by adding a rhyming word at the end of the unfinished sentences. The first word to be added is *katten* (the cat), which rhymes with *natten* (the night). Altogether, the pupils have to fill in eight different 'animal words', and they succeed in finding all of them. When they have finished the song, Karin asks the pupils how they managed to find all the right words.

- Teacher: How did you know? (responsive voice).  
1 *Hvordan visste dere det?*
- Nimrat: Because there are pictures there.  
2 *For det er bilder der.*
- Teacher: Because there are pictures, yes.  
3 *For det er bilder, ja.*
- Ahmed: I know it by heart.  
4 *Jeg kan det utenat.*
- Teacher: And you know it by heart.  
5 *Og du kan det utenat.*
- Teacher: What about you, Zahra?  
6 *Og du da, Zahra?*
- Zahra: We can hear it when we are singing it.  
7 *Vi kan høre det når vi synger det.*
- Teacher: Yes (encouraging voice).  
8 *Ja.*
- Nimrat: (Raises her hand).
- Teacher: Nimrat?  
9 *Nimrat?*
- Nimrat: When I hear you saying "sausage" xxx and so on, then I know  
it has to do with a pig, hasn't it? Because there is a picture of a  
pig there too.

- 10 *Jeg vet det da hvis du sier "pølse" xxx og sånt, da vet jeg at det er gris, ikke sant? For det står en bilde av en gris der óg.*  
 Teacher: So, some of you look at the pictures, some know it by heart, and others hear what will come afterwards.
- 11 *Så, noen ser på bildene, noen kan det utenat og noen hører hva det kommer til å bli.*  
 Teacher: First there was something with *nat:ten* (the night). (The teacher writes the word '*natten*' on the blackboard). Who is outside at night?
- 12 *Først så var det noe med nat:ten. Hvem er det som går ute om nat:ten?*  
 Pupils: The cat. The night, the cat (spontaneously repeating the rhyming words).
- 13 *Kat:ten. Nat:ten, kat:ten*  
 Teacher: The night, the cat (adding '*katten*' to '*natten*' on the blackboard).
- 14 *Nat:ten, kat:ten.*  
 Pupils: The night, the cat (read and repeat, then rhyme further spontaneously).
- 15 *Nat:ten, kat:ten.*  
 Pupils: xxx now it is the mouse, the little mouse. *Pus:a, mus:a, hus:a, mus:a* (the pussycat, the mouse, the house, the mouse). The cat wants to eat the mouse xxx (laughing loudly).
- 16 *xxx nå er det musa, lille musa. Pus:a, mus:a, hus:a, mus:a. Katten vil spise musen xxx.*

Together the teacher and the pupils find the eight rhyming pairs. Karin writes them all down at the blackboard: *natten-katten, pusen-musen*, et cetera. Afterwards the children jointly read aloud the rhyming pairs from the blackboard. Karin then tells the children that this is what rhyming is about.

- Teacher: This is to rhyme.
- 17 *Dette er å rime.*  
 Pupils: Rhyme, mime (rhyming spontaneously in response).
- 18 *Rime, mime.*  
 Teacher: When the last letters are alike, it rhymes.
- 19 *Når de siste bokstavene er like, så rimer det.*

Karin asks the pupils for more rhyming words. The children participate eagerly. They seem to enjoy playing with words and have fun finding nonsense words to make rhymes. Later on, the pupils are told to pick up their Norwegian book. The girls are asked to read aloud the first verse of “Rhyme and verse” and the boys the next one, so they carry on one after another. After this, the pupils read two by two one of the nine verses. Karin writes the verses’ rhyming words on the blackboard and tells the pupils to copy them in their exercise books.

The NL2 lesson shows a social participation structure of teacher-led whole-class instruction and a classroom discourse dominated by IRF sequences. The pupils and the teacher often collaborated on tasks, as in the singing and completing of the riddles and when determining the rhyming pairs.

In Table 3.3, the turns in the episode are characterised in terms of initiation, response, evaluation, or follow-up and in terms of the speaker (teacher or pupil). Table 3.4 indicates the frequency of occurrence of the types of turns used in the excerpt.

Turn	Type	Speaker
1	initiation	teacher
2	response	pupil
3	follow-up	teacher
4	response	pupil
5	follow-up	teacher
6	initiation	teacher
7	response	pupil
8	follow-up	teacher
9	response	teacher
10	response	pupil
11	follow-up	teacher
12	initiation	teacher
13	response	pupils
14	follow-up	teacher
15	response	pupils
16	initiation	pupils
17	follow-up	teacher
18	response	pupils
19	follow-up	teacher

Table 3.3: Turn types in Episode 3.2

Type of turn	Teacher	Pupil
Initiation	3	1
Response	1	7
Evaluation	0	0
Follow-up	7	0

Table 3.4: Frequency of occurrence of types of turns in Episode 3.2

The tables show that there was a great deal of teacher follow-up, especially as a way of acknowledging the pupils' contributions. No explicit 'evaluation' took place. Out of the 19 turns in the excerpt, 11 were teacher turns and 8 were pupil turns, in 4 of which all the pupils participated. In the beginning of the excerpt, a self-selection of pupil turns took place; in the latter part of the excerpt, the pupils participated jointly in the discourse. The teacher started off with an authentic question/elicitation, asking the pupils "How did you know?" The teacher's many uptakes, acknowledging pupils' responses, encouraged the children to make contributions to the classroom discourse.

What about the academic task structure of the NL2 rhyming lesson, i.e., how was the subject matter presented and sequenced? The excerpt and the preceding task of completing the Riddle Song show that the pupils mostly participated jointly in the classroom discourse on rhyming. Karin managed to catch the pupils' joint attention and she motivated them in various ways to participate in the instruction sequences. This enabled her eventually to expand beyond the practice of rhyming, leading the pupils to the metalinguistic level of rhyming, making them aware of what rhyming is about. How did she do this?

In order to explain the concept of rhyming, Karin motivated the pupils to participate actively by creating a joint reference frame adjusted to the children's interest. By means of a song with context-near references such as cat and mouse, the teacher achieved joint attention and joint involvement. The pictures accompanying the text also contributed to this (as shown by the children referring to the pictures in Turn 2 and 10 of the episode). Once the frame for shared understanding was established, the pupils were challenged to take one step forward, that is, finding the missing rhyming words. From there, the teacher guided them to take the next and expanding step in order to achieve a metalinguistic awareness of rhyming. What we see here is a process of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner & Ross 1976) rhyming within the children's learning

zone, i.e., the zone of proximal development, under adult guidance and in collaboration with their peer pupils.

After the pupils collaboratively found out what the practice of rhyming is, through the guided assistance of the teacher, the teacher asked the pupils “How did you know?” (Turn 1) to make the pupils aware of their strategies. The pupils shared their knowledge with their peers, e.g., Zahra saying: “We can hear it when we are singing it” (Turn 7). Finally, the teacher included the children’s answers in her summary, showing that she appreciated their contributions. The implicit praxis of rhyming was finally made explicit by the teacher, when she concluded with “This is to rhyme”. The teacher’s explanation: “When the last letters are alike”, referring to letters and not to sounds, is questionable and more a rule of thumb.

The excerpt also shows that the pupils repeatedly answer in unison when repeating and extending the rhyming sequences, which are all well-known learning strategies.

Encouraging language learning through conversations between participants with different language skills is also called ‘conversational scaffolding’. Conversational scaffolding enables the language minority children to participate in the classroom discourse on different levels, without exposing themselves too much. According to Vygotsky, language is acquired through interaction with more competent speakers. By participating in the joint classroom activities of singing and playful rhyming, less able pupils also get a chance to improve their language skills – learning new words and sentences, pronunciation and intonation. We can also see a relation to Bakhtin’s claim that people learn language from concrete utterances which they hear around them and which they again reproduce in their communicative interactions with others. According to Bakhtin (1986), people assimilate forms of language only in forms of utterances. The Riddle Song provides such utterances, which the minority pupils can appropriate by participating in the singing. At the same time, the song provides a meaningful, authentic context to challenge the NL2 pupils to participate in the practice of rhyming.

## 11.4 Comparison and discussion

The episodes of classroom practice described in this chapter illustrate both the dynamic nature of classroom discourse and the various types of

classroom discourse pupils might experience in the course of a school day. Different patterns of classroom discourse can be the result of teachers' preferences, classroom context, type of activity, topic, purpose, et cetera. During sharing time in the regular class, when the pupils were invited to share their autumn holiday experiences, the emphasis of the classroom discourse was on communication. Later, when the focus of the discourse was on instruction, the character of the discourse varies as well, as we can see when studying the discourse excerpts of the NL1 and NL2 lessons. However, it is not only across classrooms, but also within the same classroom, that we can find different patterns of educational discourse.

At first sight, the social participation structures of the two rhyming events discussed do not seem to be so different. Both are teacher-led, whole-class teaching events with a classroom discourse dominated by triadic, interactional sequences with no direct pupil nomination from the teacher before speaking. But the sequences show another, significant, difference: while Jon mainly evaluated pupils' responses (IRE), Karin was guiding the pupils' knowledge construction by follow-up moves, in which she acknowledged their contributions (IRF). In the NL2 lesson, Karin and her class jointly participated in the rhyming task, rather than individual pupils performing and the teacher evaluating. When we look closer at the presentation of the subject matter and the sequencing of the rhyming tasks, we discover that the academic task structures are different too.

The NL1 excerpt starts off with a display question, while the NL2 excerpt begins with an authentic question. Jon ignored pupil contributions that he did not feel fit in with the discourse topic and only responded with a short positive evaluation of the 'right' answers. The focus of his questioning was more on comprehension assessment than on comprehension instruction. Karin, on the other hand, did not make explicit evaluations; she encouraged and affirmed the children's contributions to the classroom dialogue by praising, repeating, and recapitulating them. This kind of follow-up move gives the teacher the opportunity to use pupils' responses as a shared basis for working and to extend the subject matter further in the pupils' zones of proximal development. While Jon's approach is more product-oriented, interested in particular responses by individual pupils who can participate in the discourse as they like (some contributing more actively than others), Karin's teaching is more process oriented, involving the pupils in the problem-solving process by scaf-



folding the classroom dialogue in order to enable a collaborative construction of knowledge on rhyming. In addition, she makes great use of cultural tools such as songs, the blackboard, and textbooks in mediating the knowledge of rhyme during her lesson. Contextualised and situated instruction makes the linguistic input more understandable, especially for NL2 pupils, and can therefore facilitate their second language development. The view of the teacher as essentially a facilitator is strongly emphasised by Vygotsky (1967) who asserted that what the child can do in cooperation today, (s)he will be able to do alone tomorrow. The perspectives on learning and teaching expressed in *L97*, emphasising active and participative learners, teachers as guides/facilitators, collaborative learning in the zone of proximal development, and making classroom discourse a centrepiece of the curriculum, are clearly influenced by sociocultural theories. We can thus conclude that Karin's integrated, whole-language teaching is very much in accordance with the intentions of the Norwegian curriculum. Furthermore, Jon's approach actually has a lot in common with the classroom practice predominating in Norwegian classrooms, especially at the primary stages, comprising the following sequences: whole-class teaching with the teacher asking questions and the pupils answering, followed by teacher instruction and finally pupils working on individual tasks, which usually are written tasks (Klette 2003b).

An analysis of classroom interaction, combining both social participation structures and academic task structures, can contribute to a better understanding of classroom discourse as educational discourse, that is, a discourse generating contexts for learning. The way social participation structures are shaped in classroom discourse influences academic task structures, and vice versa. The discourse episodes of the two Norwegian lessons show that various educational approaches facilitate different ways of pupil participation and, therefore, shape different learning contexts.

## Chapter 12

# Activity and initiative in language interactions in the Norwegian as a second language classroom

### 12.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present two different events where the children actively take part in the language interaction in the NL2 classroom, and to discuss them in relation to knowledge about language development. The first episode comes from whole class teaching, while the second comes from a play episode. In the NL2 lessons, the Norwegian language has a double function. It represents both the topic of education and the language of instruction. In the following discussion, attention is directed towards the latter. For a more extended discussion of the episodes, see Wold (2002).

In the Norwegian curriculum (Curriculum 1999) it is stressed that pupils should be active and independent. Consistent with this general position in the syllabus for NL2, it is stated that “combined, the work routines within the field are intended to promote eagerness for learning and creativity in the pupils through active participation” (*Norsk som andrespråk for språklige minoriteter* 1998:8, our translation). As we have noted in the description of the class in Chapter 10, the form teacher also likes the children to be active and independent. She also appreciates children’s initiatives when they start to argue or pose questions related to the content of the lesson.

Similarly, in studies of both first and second language development, it is repeatedly stressed that a language-learning child should be given the opportunity to be an active and influential partner in language interactions. In a literature review, Wold (1993) pointed out that interactions that seemed to facilitate language development were characterised by being reciprocal, but asymmetrical, i.e., involving an adult who was sensitive to the child’s contributions and allowed the child to influence the communication in real ways. When a child is active, she gives information of her level of competence and focus of attention allowing

the partner to adjust the communicational form and content to the receiver. To actively use language, of course, also allows for practice of new words or structures.

12.2 Whole-class teaching

The first episode was observed on 24 May 2000. The content of the lesson in both the NL1 and NL2 class concerns the rule for the two different orthographic realisations of the phoneme /ç/ (cf. second phoneme in *ich* in German). In Norwegian, the normal graphic representation of this phoneme is *kj*, but when the vowel to follow is either *i* or *y*, it is written by *k* alone. The pupils work in different ways to learn this rule, and in their homework for this day, they should have written each of the following words three times: *en kino* (a cinema), *en kiosk* (a kiosk) *en kylling* (a chicken), *en kilo* (a kilo), *en kjempe* (a giant), *en kjole* (a dress). Karin also gives the children in the integrated class a dictation containing these words. When the class is split up, Karin writes the words from the dictation in capital letters on the blackboard for the language minority children. The pupils check their own work, and comments and exclamations concerning their own performance are heard. The words are written on the blackboard in two groups (see Figure 3.2).

KINO	KJEMPE
KYLLING	KJOLE
KILO	
KIOSK	

Figure 3.2: Words starting with /ç/ written on the blackboard

The teacher presents more words, like *kjedelig* (boring) and *kirke* (church), and asks the children to which group these words belong. As part of this work, she asks for the rule several times. The first rules suggested by the children are far from right, but eventually she receives an answer pointing in the right direction. Thereafter she formulates the rule more explicitly herself: “*i* and *y* are not friends of *js*, and that is why there is never a *j* if you have an *i* and a *y*.” This explanation by the teacher is rather immediately challenged by Ivan pointing out that you can find both *i* and *j* in *kjedelig*. Ivan’s argument is responded to by

Karin who gives an answer formulated in a personal and contextualised way rather typical for this teacher: “But this is what I do in class, isn’t it? I put them far apart. They’re not allowed to be next to each other, because then there would be fighting.” The rule is further challenged by the children, however. Ali wonders about the position of *i* and *j* in the alphabet. How he formulates his questions, how Karin reacts to them, and how the topic of the lesson further evolves, is presented in Episode 3.3.

Episode 3.3: *i* and *y* are not friends of *js*

Ali initially tries to formulate his question in this way:

Ali: Hello, where is xxx alphabet. It says *jk*.  
*Hallo hvor står det xxx alfabetet. Det står jk.*

No attention is given to this question, however, and after five pupil and teacher turns, he repeats his question.

Ali: Hello, is it *i* then?  
*Hallo er det i da?*

Teacher: Yes.  
*Ja.*

Ali: When in alphabet *i j*?  
*Når det på alfabetet i j?*

Teacher: If they are next to each other in the alphabet?  
*Om de er ved siden av hverandre i alfabetet?*

Pupil: No.  
*Nei.*

Ali: Yes.  
*Ja.*

Teacher: Are they?  
*Er de det?*

Pupil: No.  
*Nei.*

Teacher: *a b c d e f g h i j*. That is where the teacher has put them next to each other.  
*a b c d e f g h i j. Der har frøken satt dem ved siden av hverandre.*

- Pupils: *c d e f g h i j* (reciting the alphabet in unison together with the teacher).  
*c d e f g h i j.*
- Pupil: *i j.*  
*i j.*
- Pupil: Oh.  
 Åh.
- Teacher: xxx so, then it's ok anyway.  
 xxx *å så går det bra allikevel da.*

The children have more on their minds, however. Ivan wonders who made the letters. This question leads to the following discussion:

- Teacher: Who has made let (starting on the word 'letters'). Letters were made thousands of years ago. First they only made ...  
*Hvem som har laget bok. Det er mange tusen år siden det ble bokstaver. Først så laget de bare ...*
- Pupil: Yes *a b c.*  
*Ja a b c.*
- Teacher: Only some drawings. In the neighbourhood of Ekeberg, there is a big school called The Maritime Academy where someone has made drawings on the mountain. Many thousands of years ago, someone drew some reindeer and some moose on the mountain. If that had been now, it would just have been written *r e i n* (the letter names are used), *rein* (reindeer) or *e l g* (the sounds of the letters are used), *elg* (moose). But many thousands of years ago, they didn't have letters. They had to draw instead.  
*Bare noen tegninger. I nærheten av Ekeberg er det en stor skole som heter Sjømannsskolen. Der har noen tegnet på fjellet. For mange tusen år siden så var det noen som tegnet noen reinsdyr og noen elg på fjellet. Hvis det hadde vært nå, så ville man jo bare skrevet r e i n /er e i en/, rein or e l g /e l g/ elg. Men for mange tusen år siden så hadde de ikke bokstaver. Da måtte de tegne isteden.*
- Ali: But when they wanted to talk?  
*Men når de skulle snakke?*
- Teacher: And then was. After a while, they found it too bothersome to have to draw a house every time they wanted to say house.  
*Og så ble fant de etter hvert ut at det ble alt for tungvint da og måtte tegne et hus hver gang man skulle si hus.*

- Ali: But when they ...  
*Men når de ...*
- Teacher: And that is why it was ...  
*Og derfor så ble det ...*
- Ali/Ahmed: But when they wanted to talk?  
*Men når de skulle snakke?*
- Teacher: Yes?  
*Ja?*
- Pupil: When they wanted ...  
*Når de skulle ...*
- Ivan (?): Then there are letters.  
*Så er det bokstaver.*
- Teacher: I don't know anything other than they talked just like you and me. But it wasn't exactly the same.  
*Jeg vet ikke noe annet enn at de snakket sånn som deg og meg. Men det var ikke helt likt da.*
- Ali: For example, you wanted to talk about ...  
*For eksempel du skulle snakke om ...*
- Teacher: I think they only said come here if they should come. I think they said shoot when they were to shoot, but I don't know enough about that.  
*Jeg tror de bare sa kom hit hvis de skulle komme. Jeg tror de sa skyt hvis de skulle skyte, men det vet jeg ikke helt nok om da.*
- Pupil: Eh.  
*Hæ.*
- Ahmed: Then they have then they have letters then.  
*Da har de da har de bokstaver da.*
- Ivan: Yes, when you talk you hear letters.  
*Ja, når man snakker så hører man bokstaver.*

After some minor teacher and pupil turns, the communication continued in the following way.

- Teacher: But is but one isn't it so that letters are something you write, and what you say is sound?  
*Men er men en er det ikke slik at bokstaver skriver man og det man sier er lyd?*
- Nimrat: Yes.  
*Ja.*

- Ahmed: But you say letters.  
*Men man sier bokstaver.*
- Pupil: Talk.  
*Snakke.*
- Teacher: You feel you think that?  
*Du synes du tenker det?*
- Ahmed: Yes  
*Ja.*
- Ivan: Yes, but otherwise they would have to talk like this this like  
*tegn språk* (a drawn language).  
*Ja, men ellers så måtte de snakke sånn her her sånn her som  
tegn språk.*
- Ahmed: *Tegn språk* (said simultaneously with Ivan's *tegn språk*)  
*Tegn språk.*
- Ivan: If they weren't supposed to take letters.  
*Hvis de ikke skulle ta bokstaver.*
- Teacher: Yes.  
*Ja.*
- Pupil: Eh.  
*Æh.*
- Teacher: Mm.  
*Mm*
- Ahmed: Or bring a whole stack of paper, and then they were supposed  
to draw.  
*eller ta med sånn bunke med ark og så skal de tegne.*
- Pupil: Eh.  
*Øh.*
- Pupil: xxx  
xxx
- Ali: You see, they couldn't draw.  
*Skal vi se de greide ikke tegne.*

Note that the dictionary translation of Ivan's *tegn språk* is sign language. For the boys, however, *tegn språk* most probably means 'a drawn language'. In Norwegian, the word *tegn* (sign) and *tegne* (draw) are highly similar, and this seems to explain how their surprising conclusion is expressed.

In this incident the children were rather active. When they had something to say, they did so, and turns of communication were weakly controlled by Karin. They repeatedly showed initiative by bringing in or

asking for new information and thus their activity had a direct influence on the flow of communication. The pupils also showed a high degree of persistence. They did not give up. They kept on presenting their questions until the teacher understood what they were wondering about. Both the question about the position of *i* and *j* in the alphabet and the question about what people did when they wanted to talk before there were letters had to be repeated several times before the teacher picked them up. Karin did not try to stop the children's contributions. On the contrary, she tried to present information directly tuned to their questions and allowed their interests to influence the further content of the lesson. Thus, reflections about more general relationships between oral and written language, a topic initiated by the children, continued to influence the flow of communication coming after the presented excerpt.

It should be noted that the introductory orthographic task also focused on the relationship between the oral and written mode, although clearly on a more micro level. When looking in more detail at the teacher's explanations, they are actually somewhat unclear because she was in this part of the lesson not precise enough when it came to the sequencing of the letters involved. This topic, however, is not discussed further here.

### 12.3 Playing

The following episode comes from a lesson on 7 January 2000. The pupils in the class are allowed to play rather often. Towards the end of this lesson there is about 15 minutes for play. When the pupils are going to play, they choose freely among the options that are available in the classroom, and they often form groups. On this day, three boys were playing with a dollhouse, and two girls were playing with Lego rather close by. Thus, there were several conversations taking place simultaneously, and the classroom was rather noisy. In what follows, two extracts from the conversations are presented. In the first one, we hear the boys; the second focuses on the girls' contributions. In the extracts we have not attempted to identify who said what in the episode involving the boys, but none of the utterances came from the teacher.



## Episode 3.4: What's it called?

The boys

Pupil: Sandip, you can have (they point at a bed).

*Sandip, du kan få.*

Pupil: I don't have anything xxx.

*Jeg har ingen ting xxx.*

Pupil: You can have it because I don't need.

*Du kan få den fordi jeg trenger ikke.*

Pupil: That's it. xxx doesn't want.

*Det er det. xxx vil ikke ha.*

Pupil: It isn't dangerous. Wait.

*Det er ikke farlig. Vent da.*

Pupil: See if anybody can.

*Se om noen kan.*

Pupil: You can have this one.

*Du kan få denne her.*

Pupil: Bed.

*Seng.*

Pupil: You can pretend.

*Du kan late.*

Pupil: Yes.

*Ja.*

Pupil: How do you make xxx?

*Hvordan lager du xxx?*

Pupil: Because that. What's it called?

*Fordi det. Hva heter det?*

Pupil: Where are the big plates?

*Hvor er de store tallerkene?*

Pupil: They can be bed too.

*De kan også være seng.*

Pupil: xxx xxx xxx.

*xxx xxx xxx.*

Pupil: Lots can sleep in they.

*Mange som kan sove oppi de.*

Pupil: But they're little then.

*Men de er små da.*

Pupil: Small things.

*Små ting.*

The girls

- Ayse: I have Leg not I I have like those Leg at home.  
*Jeg har Leg ikke jeg jeg har sånne Leg hjemme.*
- Flora: I have lots of Lego.  
*Jeg har masse Lego.*
- Pupil: I have it at home.  
*Jeg har det hjemme.*
- Ayse: I have Lego with my Mummy at home.  
*Jeg har Lego med mammaen min hjemme.*

This episode also represents an example of classroom communication with children actively using the Norwegian language. Simultaneously with the concrete play there was a relatively continuous flow of conversation. The children themselves were the ones to take the initiatives, both concerning what and how to play and what to say. No direct interactions or regulations from the teacher were observed.

## 12.4 Discussion

The episodes presented in this chapter show active children with possibilities to influence their situation. They were actively communicating in Norwegian because they had something important to say, either concerning the topic of the lesson (Episode 3.3) or to keep the play going (Episode 3.4). The group organisation of the children in the play episode, furthermore, allowed several conversations to run simultaneously, giving many children the opportunity to take an active part in both the understanding and using of Norwegian.

Apart from the high level of child activity and influence in both episodes, however, they are different in many ways related to language development. Wong Fillmore (1994) has emphasised the importance of the ratio of language learners to speakers of the target language when language learning is concerned. In this NL2 lesson, the only native speaker of Norwegian is the teacher. Nevertheless, in whole-class teaching, all twelve pupils in the class have the possibility to listen to her and thus to receive adequate language input in Norwegian. The transcription also shows that the teacher talked rather much. For example, she gave the children a rather extended explanation of where letters came from. On the other hand, no native speaker or other speakers with high

competence in Norwegian participated in the play episode. In the 15 minutes of play, therefore, the children involved did not receive any language input from a native speaker except for a few utterances from the teacher and the observer. The teacher was in the classroom, but she was engaged in another activity with some other children.

Other researchers have also shown that children's language development is stimulated in interactions with adults (McCartney 1984; Dickinson 2001). The inclusion of a grown-up partner entails many possibilities in the interface between language learning and cognition. When children ask questions, it is possible for the more competent partner to answer them then and there. This means that the content of the lesson may be finely adjusted to the children's interests and level of understanding and, in Vygotskian terms, to their zone of proximal development as is the case in the present example. By her reactions, the teacher, furthermore, gave the children opportunities to participate in discussions in Norwegian that are cognitively appropriate for their level of development. The teacher, furthermore, not only passively reacts to what the children present. Instruction in itself creates a zone of proximal development by stimulating or challenging children or in other ways preparing the ground for authentic child questions. Consistent with such a way of thinking, the national curriculum states that

"education shall meet children, adolescents and adults on their own terms and so lead them to the borderland where they can encounter the new by opening their minds and testing their skills." (Curriculum 1999:27).

It is, in this connection, important to note that it is a rather formal orthographic learning task that turns on the series of authentic questions from the children. The orthographic task also influences the content of the following communication by introducing the topic of relationships between the oral and written mode. Thus, the children's initiatives are important in the present case, but the triggering effect of the task presented by the teacher should not be overlooked. In the play episode, on the other hand, there was nobody to introduce challenges or to follow up the questions posed by the children.

We have already mentioned that when the children are included in communication episodes with the teacher, we can expect an adequate amount of language input in Norwegian. This language input, furthermore, may also function as a finely tuned model to specific children. A good example of this is connected to Ali, the pupil who attempted to formulate a question about the position of *i* and *j* in the alphabet. After he

had tried to formulate it in three different ways that, from a formal point of view, were all unsuccessful, the teacher presented a more precise formulation that Ali accepted. Adequate language models may also be found in the play episode, however. One of the girls, Ayse, labelled the playing blocks *Leg* instead of *Lego*. In the turn directly following, the correct form was used by one of the other participants, however. But it is reasonable to expect that the chances that this will occur increases when one of the participants is an adult whose mother tongue is the target language.

When discussing the qualitative differences between the two episodes presented, it seems also reasonable to introduce the concept of 'extended discourse'. According to Aukrust (2001:4, our translation),

"'extended' is related to two aspects of the communication. The conversations are extended by way of pointing outside of the immediate context of communication. They are cognitively complex and establish logical or other kinds of relationships between events and phenomena, and it will generally be possible to describe them in terms of genres, for instance, stories, explanations, metalinguistic conversations, and definitions. The conversations are extended, furthermore, in the way of themes continuing over more conversational turns."

Episode 3.3 has many of these characteristics – explanations, metalinguistic themes by its focus on the relationship between oral and written language, and extension of themes over several turns, whereas the second does not. Episode 3.3, furthermore, points outside of the immediate context of communication and may thus be described as decontextualised. Episode 3.4, on the other hand, is clearly context-dependent. The verbal communication is supported by a shared here-and-now context. The language in the episode contains many deictic words, and in order fully to understand what is communicated, additional information would be required. Extended discourse has been found to be especially stimulating for language development (Dickinson 2001). Language minority children learn to use language in context-dependent ways before they manage to use it in decontextualised ways (Cummins 1984, 2000). Adequate development of the latter thus seems very relevant to the children's possibilities to succeed in school.

Language development, therefore, depends not only on how actively the target language is used, but also on the more specific quality of language interactions (Dickinson 2001). In the present discussion, much emphasis has been placed on who the participants in the communication

are and its related consequences. The episode from whole-class teaching includes an active adult, the teacher, who plays an important part in creating challenges and solving problems. Such a role is important for learning. Such a role is lacking during the play episode. Could it be included? Perhaps. Research has shown that adults are often reluctant when it comes to participating in the play of children (Dickinson 2001). But Dickinson also claims that this may result in unintended negative consequences for the children's language development, and he says that the study in which he has been involved

“can provide some guidelines to teachers as they struggle with the tension between a desire to foster children's play and a desire to provide support to children's language and literacy growth” (Dickinson 2001: 226).

Dickinson also presents examples of grown-ups who by their creative and well adjusted communication seem to increase the challenges of play without destroying it.

## Chapter 13

# Vocabulary learning through oral communication

### 13.1 Introduction

A well-developed vocabulary is an important part of a child's language competence during both the preschool and school years. The size of a child's vocabulary is related to oral as well as reading comprehension (Beck, McKeown & Omanson 1987). There is, furthermore, a close relationship between the acquisition of new knowledge and the learning of new words. For learners of a first language, the size of the vocabulary normally increases rapidly through the school years (Nagy & Herman 1987). Second language learners often have fewer opportunities to be exposed to the target language than their majority peers. Thus, many language minority children have a relatively small vocabulary in their second language (Strating-Keurentjes 2000), and this is also the case for the language minority pupils included in the Norwegian class in this study (cf. Chapter 9). A weak vocabulary may interfere with their possibilities for success in school.

Consequently, an important issue for the education of language minority children is increasing their possibilities for vocabulary learning in school. A focus on vocabulary learning is relevant for all lessons, but particularly so for NL2 lessons. Accordingly, one of the goals for such lessons during the first four years in school is:

“In experiencing many different situations, they shall develop concepts and a vocabulary related to their own daily life and to issues from the thematically structured content lessons.” (*Norsk som andrespråke for språklige minoriteter* 1998:12, our translation)

Vocabulary learning takes place within the context of both oral and written communication. The main research focus regarding vocabulary learning in a second language in school has been on acquisition through reading. Unfortunately, little is at present known from research when it comes to vocabulary learning in the second language through oral input. Ellis (1999:38) states “it is difficult to locate a single article on the relationship between oral input and L2 vocabulary development”. Oral

input, however, is the primary source for second language vocabulary learning until the children are competent readers. Oral input, furthermore, is often part of a more complex communication situation also including information from a here-and-now context. When the topic of the verbal communication is the here and now, the non-language context often provides important clues to the meaning of what is said. To understand what is being communicated, furthermore, is of central importance for language development. In the words of Wong Fillmore (1989:321), "gaining access to meaning is a crucial first step in language learning". In an overview of how word meanings are acquired, Jenkins & Dixon (1983) also mention to accompany a present object by a label as one of the important ways. Thus, it seems very interesting to analyse how our teacher exploits the possibilities for vocabulary learning in the here-and-now context, for example, by studying how she accompanies present objects, pictures, or actions by appropriate words.

It is often emphasised, though, that the communication in the classroom is focused on the there and then. Although this is clearly very often the case, it is not always so. Much of the instructional communication such as "find your book", "close the door", et cetera, are clearly related to the physical context present at the time of communication. The same is true for other types of classroom communication. In *Ekelund's* third grade classroom we have, for example, observed that the children were given a crossword puzzle task on flower names in which the clues for which words to fill in were given by black-and-white drawings of the relevant flowers. Another instance was when the teacher, as part of work on the past, brought different objects to the class, discussing with the children who used the objects, what they were called, and what they were used for. She also communicated with them on an ongoing game of Memory and talked directly about stickers used as rewards for the children's homework. This chapter will focus on the two last mentioned episodes and discuss them in relation to vocabulary development. Both of the episodes come from NL2 lessons, and both focus on incidental, in contrast to intentional, language learning. In incidental language learning, language learning is not the primary focus of the child, but it comes as a non-intended consequence of the activities in which the child is involved.

### 13.2 Memory and Stickers

The children in this class were often allowed to play, and when playing, they were free to choose between the different possibilities available in this classroom. In the beginning of January, Memory was popular. Approximately 25 minutes of Memory play on 12 and 14 January 2000 have been recorded, and part of the conversation accompanying the game has been transcribed. Three excerpts from the transcription from 12 January, illustrating important characteristics of the communication, are presented in what follows.

Memory is played in the following way. A number of identical pairs of picture cards are put on the table with their picture side down. The aim of the participants is to identify these cards so as to make pairs. One of the participants selects a card, turns it over and shows the picture to the others. Then she or he selects another card, showing it to the other players in the same way. If the pictures are alike, the player keeps the pair and is allowed to continue playing. If not, the cards are put back on the table again, face down on the same spot as earlier. The participant ending up with the highest numbers of pairs is the winner. The play requires the children's attention both to remember the pictures and their position on the table.

In this case, the picture pieces represent an important part of the concrete here-and-now context within which the communication is taking place. In the actual Memory game the pictures represent, for example, ball, pear, umbrella, and flower. The different activities of the game – selecting pieces, showing the pictures to the others, putting them back, face down, in the right place, having a turn, et cetera – are also important context elements.

The following turns come from early the second time Memory was played on 12 January. Some children wanted to continue playing, and some new participants were included.

#### Episode 3.5: Memory

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| Nimrat:  | May I attend xxx play xxx?             |
| 1        | <i>Kan jeg bli med xxx spille xxx?</i> |
| Teacher: | Yes.                                   |
| 2        | <i>Ja.</i>                             |
| Teacher: | It concerns to remember then.          |
| 3        | <i>Det gjelder å huske da.</i>         |



Ivan: Did you find? What was it?  
 4 *Fant du? Hva var det?*

Nimrat: Oh, yes. In order to find two equal.  
 5 *Og ja. For å finne to like.*

Sandip: It was a mouse.  
 6 *Det var en mus.*

Nimrat: Is it my turn now?  
 7 *Er det min tur nå?*

Pupil: No.  
 8 *Nei.*

Teacher: It is Ivan's turn.  
 9 *Det er Ivans tur.*

Teacher: No, you have to look. The rabbit and the flower, okay. Now it is my turn. You have to remember. Pattern and flower, okay. Do you remember where the other flower was then?  
 10 *Nei du må se. Kaninen og blomsten, ok. Nå er det min tur. Du må huske. Mønster og blomst, ok. Husker du hvor den andre blomsten var da?*

Sandip: Don't know.  
 11 *Vet ikke.*

Teacher: Yes, then they are yours.  
 12 *Ja, da er de dine.*

Sandip: Yes.  
 13 *Ja.*

Teacher: You got a pair. Once more. If one gets a pair, it is once more.  
 14 *Du fikk par. Om igjen. Hvis man får par, er det om igjen.*

Sandip (?): It is a bit difficult.  
 15 *Det er litt vanskelig.*

Ivan (?): This is difficult.  
 16 *Den er vanskelig.*

Pupil: Yes.  
 17 *Ja.*

Teacher: Sandip's turn.  
 18 *Sandips tur.*

Teacher: Not so fast. We have to look.  
 19 *Ikke så fort. Vi må få se.*

Teacheer: Yes.  
 20 *Ja.*

Teacher: Upside down.  
 21 *Opp ned.*

The following turns come from some time later in the same play episode.

- Teacher: You have to get the same boat then.  
22 *Du må få samme båten da.*  
Teacher: Yes, fine. This you have. Once more because you got a pair.  
23 *Ja, fint. Den har du. Om igjen for du fikk par.*  
Ivan: This got a while ago.  
24 *Den fikk istad.*  
Teacher: This laid here near-by.  
25 *Den lå her i nærheten.*  
Pupil: Oh oho.  
26 *Åh åhå.*  
Pupil: Your turn.  
27 *Din tur.*  
Teacher: This has to lie here so we remember.  
28 *Den må ligge her så vi husker.*

The following turns come even later in the play episode.

- Teacher: The lion.  
29 *Løven.*  
Pupil: It is a dog.  
30 *Det er hund.*  
Teacher: Is it a dog yes? Labbetuss? (The teacher later explains that Labbetuss most probably is the name of a big dog from a children's TV show from a long time ago).  
31 *Er det en hund ja? Labbetuss?*  
Pupil: There yes.  
32 *Der ja.*  
Teacher: Same place.  
33 *Samme sted.*  
Sandip (?): I didn't look at.  
34 *Jeg så ikke på.*  
Teacher: Umbrella, you see.  
35 *Paraply ser du.*

The following episode comes from 17 January 2000. Karin often rewards the children's written homework with stickers. Many of the children gather around Karin's desk while she puts stickers in the pupils' books. In what follows, we present two excerpts from the accompanying com-

munication. In this example, she used stickers representing different animals such as a zebra, hippopotamus, and camel. Some of the children – among them Ali – had not written anything at home. They had to write during the lesson. The other children were allowed to play when they had received their stickers. Thus, the number of children listening to Karin's communication varied.

#### Episode 3.6: Stickers

- Teacher: Here comes a zebra. One for each. xxx the book xxx.  
 1 *Her kommer det en sebra. En på hver. xxx boken xxx.*  
 Pupils: Is that it?  
 2 *Er det den?*  
 Teacher: Yes, there's the zebra.  
 3 *Ja, sebra der.*  
 Pupil: And zebra.  
 4 *Og sebra.*  
 Teacher: And here you shall have a hippopotamus.  
 5 *Og her skal du få en flodhest.*  
 Pupil: Hippopotamus.  
 6 *Flodhest.*  
 Teacher: And then you can do what you want.  
 7 *Og så kan du gjøre hva du vil.*

The following turns came a bit later.

- Teacher: What shall we take now? A xxx. Like that. And Nimrat.  
 8 *Hva skal vi ta nå? En xxx. Sånn. Og Nimrat.*  
 Teacher: A rhinoceros. Ali to write (encouraging Ali to do the writing he was expected to do as homework for that day). A rhinoceros, and then we'll take a racoon.  
 9 *Et nesehorn. Ali til å skriv. Et nesehorn, og så tar vi en vaskebjørn.*  
 Nimrat: A racoon?  
 10 *Vaskebjørn?*  
 Teacher: At least I think it is a racoon. Or is it a panda?  
 11 *Jeg tror i hvert fall det der er vaskebjørn. Eller er det en panda?*  
 Nimrat: Panda, I think.  
 12 *Panda tror jeg.*

Teacher: Yes, it is a panda.  
13 *Ja, det er en panda.*

### 13.3 Discussion

A minimum requirement when children are going to learn words is that they encounter the words in one situation or another. It therefore seems reasonable to ask how the teacher exploits the opportunities for using a varied vocabulary appropriate for the ongoing activity in the episodes just presented. For preschool children, the use of a varied vocabulary by the teacher is related to the children's language development (Dickinson 2001). Most probably the same is true for school children learning their second language. When discussing vocabulary use, it is necessary to take into consideration the variability of different words the children are going to learn, for example, words for objects, activities, and relations. The following discussion, however, focuses primarily on words for objects and activities.

When looking at the Memory episode, the frequent repetitions of some themes are evident. These themes are primarily related to the regulating of the activities of the game. The excerpts illustrate some of these themes, yet their repetitive character is difficult to illustrate by the short cuts included here. Probably the most frequent theme at all is turn-taking, and this is the case both for the teacher's and the children's turns. In the excerpts, turn-taking is the theme or one of the themes in Turns 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 23, and 27. The necessity to remember (Turns 3, 10, 28), to look at the pictures (Turns 10, 19, 35), and to put them back in the same place (Turns 28 and 33) are examples of other important regulating themes. The participants also frequently express the relationship between the two pictures chosen, primarily by noticing that somebody has "a pair" (Turns 14 and 23). It could be noted that all the frequently occurring themes mentioned are found in the first excerpt, probably because it represents the introduction to the game and its rules for some of the participants.

Repetition of themes in communication is, of course, reasonable since the activities of the game are highly repetitive. But although this also often means repetition of vocabulary, it should be noted that it also opens up the possibility of expressing the same theme in different ways within the same meaningful context. The expressions of the theme of turn-

taking may illustrate this point. Although the word 'turn' very frequently was used, other expressions, for example, *om igjen* (once more) (Turns 14, 23) and *en gang til* (another time) (not illustrated in the excerpts) were also found. Interestingly, *om igjen* was *only* used by the teacher, indicating the possibilities for vocabulary growth in children within this communication episode.

Another frequent theme in the Memory game is the picture cards themselves. In contrast to the repetitive character of the activities of the play, the picture cards represent varied objects and thus present opportunities for the use of a more varied vocabulary. How then do the participants refer to these cards? The cards are sometimes referred to by the deictic device *den* (this), sometimes by naming the picture more directly by way of nouns such as a mouse, flower, or dog. Episode 3.5 contains a sequence of turns where deictic devices are frequently used (Turns 23, 24, 25). A little later, on the other hand, the references are mainly by way of more specific nouns (Turns 29, 30, 31, 35). The episode in addition includes several elliptic formulations where a reference to the picture could easily have been included, but where it is deleted by the speaker (Turns 19, 21, 28, 33). For many playing turns, furthermore, no utterance at all is directed towards the cards. Using deictic words and elliptic formulations are, of course, common and, in many cases, sufficient for successful oral communication. By their frequent use, vocabulary variability is reduced, however.

It is interesting to compare the verbal references to the picture cards to those used by the teacher when giving the children stickers (illustrated in Episode 3.6). The classroom event from which the two excerpts are taken, includes about 40 turns. The teacher referred to the stickers with animal labels 23 times, and 13 different animals were mentioned. Thus, the teacher introduced a high number of new words in a rather short time. She might have put the stickers in the children's books with remarks as: This is for you. Here it comes et cetera – just using deictic formulations so frequently used in the Memory game. She hardly did that at all during the sticker episode, however.

When looking at the children's contributions in this case, it is interesting to note that they included the animal name just used by the teacher seven times in their turns. We have given examples of this in the excerpts by the children's turns "And zebra" (Turn 4) and "Hippopotamus" (Turn 6). Several times the children seem almost to repeat the word for themselves. These examples remind us of experiences reported

by Saville-Troike (1988) when studying second language-learning preschool children having a 'silent' period in their language development. By attaching microphones directly to the children, she noticed that they often repeated words and expressions used by others to themselves in a low voice. By posing specific questions, the teacher may also more directly stimulate the children to repeat an animal's name, as when she is asking Nimrat if it is a racoon or a panda (Turn 11) – to which the child answers "panda, I think" (Turn 12).

In school there often seems to be an emphasis on explicit and de-contextualised speech (Gustavsson 1988). No pressure towards explicit expressions was observed during the Memory game. Nor did the teacher by her own utterances present a consistent model of explicit referencing. When talking about the stickers, she did that, however, and it could be argued that, in this case, she exploits the possibilities for vocabulary learning to a high degree – at least when it comes to the learning of nouns. By her communication practice, she focuses the children's attention on the more specific content of the stickers, not only on the fact that they receive a sticker as reward. This happens, furthermore, in a situation in which the context provides the meaning of the animal names used by the teacher. Thus, to understand the communication, so frequently emphasised by researchers of language development, is possible in this situation, even for words previously unknown to a child.

It is interesting to discuss whether more explicit references to the picture cards could be used in the Memory game without destroying its form of communication and its playfulness. Most probably that could be done. Both referencing by nouns and deictic words are already included in the communication. Similarly, we may find both elliptic and more explicit formulations. For example, in Episode 3.5, Turn 10, the teacher says "You have to look. The rabbit and the flower", while in Turn 19, she only says "Not so fast. We have to look", without including *what* we have to look at. By increasing the reflection of the flow of communication, the vocabulary learning potentialities of the situation could be strengthened by including *more* of what is already a natural part of the participants' communication.

When it comes to the possibilities of vocabulary learning within a concrete here-and-now context in the classroom, it is of course also important to consider whether the vocabulary included is adequately adjusted to the children's level of development. In the two instances reported, it seems reasonable to expect that the animal names presented

in Episode 3.5 are of appropriate difficulty for these children. Many of the pictures in the Memory task, such as ball and flower, most probably represent concepts that are too easy. But the Memory game could easily be adjusted to the children's level of vocabulary development by choosing other pictures. The content of the play could, furthermore, be adjusted so as to prepare children for a set of words later to be used in other instructional tasks. The same is, of course, true for the stickers (Episode 3.6) which could deliberately be chosen to represent different content areas.

## **Chapter 14**

# **Learning, language, and culture in lessons other than Norwegian**

### **14.1 Introduction**

In order to get a better understanding of the premises for minority pupils' participation and performance in the regular class, some of the difficulties and challenges minority pupils might meet during classroom discourse in subject matter lessons will be discussed in this chapter. Two episodes of classroom discourse will be presented. The subject matter lesson selected is a Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education lesson and, in connection with an episode from this lesson, a related discourse episode from Pupil Time is also included.

The oral and written language used in the educational discourse during subject matter lessons serves a double function for language minority pupils: it transmits the subject matter to be learned and it provides an important source of linguistic input they need in order to learn the second language (Wong Fillmore 1982). Observations and analyses of the classroom discourse in class 3A reveal that minority pupils time and again encounter difficulties when being simultaneously involved in the processes of learning a language and learning through that language (Halliday 1993). Language minority children's school learning involves not just obtaining linguistic and cognitive competence, it also demands acquiring knowledge of the culture the Norwegian language is a part of. Cultural knowledge is often tacit knowledge, taken for granted, and therefore seldom communicated explicitly.

The linguistic, social, and cultural contexts of language minority pupils' everyday experiences represent an important aspect of the reference frames through which they interpret and respond to what is said in classroom discourse. As the episodes of classroom discourse presented below will show, there might occur a discrepancy between what is assumed to be 'common knowledge' (Edwards & Mercer 1987) in the classroom discourse and the knowledge and experiences minority pupils bring to the classroom. Minority pupils' opportunities for creating meaning, i.e., learning, by means of classroom discourse will be impeded



when they do not understand the language or do not share the understandings the discourse topic is based on.

The aim of this chapter is to explore both the cultural dimensions of language comprehension problems minority pupils might experience during processes of teaching and learning in the regular classroom and how these problems are dealt with. The adopted interpretative framework is a sociocultural one, viewing learning as creating meaning by means of language and as a process that is socially and culturally situated. According to Vygotsky (1986), language performs a crucial role in mediating between children's cognitive development and their cultural and socio-historical environment. The focus of discussion will be on the cultural dimensions of the discourse topics and the miscomprehension arising out of the discrepancy between implicit assumptions of what is common knowledge and minority pupils' lack of background knowledge.

## **14.2 Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education**

Before presenting the episode from the Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education (CRE) lesson, a short introduction to the sociohistorical context of religious education in Norwegian primary schools will be given.

Lutheranism was introduced to Norway in 1536 and became the country's state religion, the Lutheran Church of Norway. State and church are thus closely connected in Norway and religious ceremonies, such as baptism and confirmation, are established parts of Norwegian culture. Christian Studies has a long tradition in Norwegian public schools, starting with the instruction in Christianity from 1739. In 1997, as part of the educational reform, Christian Knowledge and Religious and Ethical Education was introduced as a new school subject. Earlier there was a possibility of exemption for pupils not belonging to the Church of Norway, but now CRE has to be taken by all pupils since the subject, besides Christianity, includes an orientation to other world religions and life philosophies as well. The subject's basis is nonetheless Christianity, in the form "which set and still sets its stamp on Norwegian cultural and social life" (Curriculum 1999:98). The CRE Syllabus for grade three states, among other things, that the pupils should become

acquainted with baptism and its background in Biblical narrative, i.e., the story of John the Baptist.

The timetable for class 3A shows two periods of CRE per week. Autumn 1999, the regular CRE teacher, Tore, attended Diploma of Education courses and several teachers replaced him during his absence. The episode below is from the CRE lesson on 29 October 1999.

Niklas, a young substitute teacher, presents himself to the class. After some discussions among the pupils about what the last CRE lesson was on, the teacher tells the class that he will read the story of John the Baptist for them. Afterwards they are supposed to draw a picture related to the story, one of the usual activities in the CRE lessons. The teacher tells the children to open the CRE book *Broene* (Bakken, Bakken & Haug 1998), which means 'The Bridges', to page 29, and then he starts reading from the chapter on John the Baptist. It is a long and difficult text, containing many rare, i.e., low frequency, words and the teacher stops reading after every paragraph in order to ask the pupils whether they understand what he is reading to them.

#### Episode 3.7: John the Baptist

Teacher: (reads) John baptises people. In The New Testament a story is told about a man called John. (...) John preached that people should convert to God. They should get baptised in order to get forgiveness of their sins. (...) People were wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. Then John said to them: "I baptise you with water. But one more powerful than me will come. I am not even worthy to untie the thongs of his sandals. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

*Johannes døper folk. I Det nye testamente står det fortalt om en mann som het Johannes. (...) Johannes forkynte at folk skulle vende om til Gud. De skulle la seg døpe for å få tilgivelse for syndene sine. (...) Folk tenkte I sitt stille sinn at Johannes kanskje var Messias. Da sa Johannes til dem: "Jeg døper dere med vann. Men det kommer en som er sterkere enn jeg. Jeg er ikke en gang verdig til å åpne remmen på sandalen hans. Han skal døpe dere med Hellig Ånd og ild."*

Teacher: Do you understand what I am talking about?  
*Skjønner dere hva jeg prater om?*

Pupils: Yes.  
*Ja.*

Teacher: You understand everything I say?  
*Dere skjønner hva jeg sier alt sammen?*

Pupils: Yes.  
*Ja.*

Teacher: There were no difficult words, or?  
*Det var ikke vanskelige ord, eller?*

Pupils: No, no.  
*Nei, nei.*

The teacher goes on reading the next paragraph, and then he asks the pupils again whether they understand what he is reading. When some pupils reply "yes", the teacher proceeds by reading the next paragraph, "John baptises Jesus".

Teacher: (reads) John baptises Jesus. The New Testament says that Jesus went to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John did not want to baptise Jesus and he said: "I need to be baptised by you, and you come to me!" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now! We have to do this to fulfill God's righteousness." As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. Suddenly, heaven was opened. Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove. A voice from heaven said: "This is my son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased."  
*Johannes døper Jesus. I Det nye testamente står det at Jesus drog til Jordan for å bli døpt av Johannes. Men Johannes ville ikke døpe Jesus, og han sa: "Jeg trenger å bli døpt av deg, og så kommer du til meg!" Jesus svarte: "La det nå skje! Dette må vi gjøre for å oppfylle Guds rettferdighet." Da Jesus var blitt døpt, gikk han opp av vannet. Plutselig åpnet himmelen seg. Jesus så Guds Ånd komme ned over seg som ed due. En stemme fra himmelen sa: "Dette er min sønn, den elskede, som jeg har behag i."*

Teacher: Do you know what to baptise means?  
*Vet dere hva det er å døpe?*

Pupil: Yes.  
*Ja.*

Teacher: Can you explain to me what 'to baptise' means?  
*Kan dere forklare meg hva det er å døpe?*

Pupils: (Remain silent).

Teacher: Can you tell me what it means to baptise somebody?  
*Kan dere forklare meg hva det er å døpe noen?*

(Now Silje and Michael raise their hands to indicate they are ready to answer the question. The teacher gives the floor to Silje).

Silje: Somebody gets xx water on the head and things like that. So they will believe in God and such. And will go to heaven.  
*Noen får xx vann på hodet og sånn. Fordi de skal tro på Gud og sånn. Og dra til himmelen.*

Teacher: Very good!

*Kjempefint!*

Teacher: (reads) John is captured by Herod (interrupted by Silje).  
*Jon blirtatt til fange av Herodes.*

Silje: Not everybody gets baptised. There are many who just get infant blessed.  
*Det er ikke alle som blir døpt. Det er mange som bare blir barnevelsigna.*

Pupil: I have not been baptised.

*Jeg er ikke blitt døpt.*

Teacher: There are probably many here who have not been baptised.  
*Det er sikkert mange her som ikke er blitt døpt.*

Pupil: Not me either.

*Ikke jeg heller.*

Pupil: Not me.

*Ikke jeg.*

Pupil: I am infant blessed.

*Jeg er barnevelsigna.*

Then the teacher carries on reading again. When he has finished the paragraph about John being captured by Herod, he asks the class some more questions.

Teacher: Do you remember something of what I said about John? What I said about John? What I read about John? What did John do? (Still nobody answers and the teacher tries again.) What was John's job in a way? Not exactly his job, but what he did.  
*Husker dere noe av hva jeg fortalte om Johannes? Hva jeg sa om Johannes? Hva jeg leste om Johannes? Hva gjorde Johannes? Hva var liksom jobben til Johannes? Ikke akkurat jobben hans, men hva han gjorde.*

(Silje raises her hand, then Michael follows).

Silje: He baptised people. And told other people about God.  
*Han døpte folk. Og fortalte om Gud til andre folk.*

Teacher: Quite right.  
*Helt riktig.*

The teacher continues asking questions, but it turns out that most of the pupils have difficulties answering them. Only Silje, Ida and Stian, all ethnic Norwegian pupils, manage to answer one question each. Eventually, the teacher asks the pupils to make a drawing of what he has read for them. The pupils collect their exercise books from the bookshelves, while talking aloud to each other. On the way back to their desks, some children discuss what to draw. Nimrat, who has already returned to her desk, overhears their conversation.

Pupil: What do we draw?  
*Hva skal vi tegne?*

Pupil: I will draw that he gets baptised, I.  
*Jeg skal tegne at han ble døpt, jeg.*

Pupils: Me too. xx me too.  
*Det skal jeg og. xx jeg og.*

Teacher: xxx very good  
*xxx kjempefint.*

Nimrat: When he was killed?  
*Når han blir drept?*

Pupil: Baptised.  
*Døpt.*

Teacher: Baptised. xxx. Baptised. Not /e:/, but /ø:/.  
*Døpt. xxx. Døpt. Ikke /e:/, men /ø:/.*

Nimrat: Baptised?  
*Døpt?*

Teacher: Yes (using English).  
*Yes.*

Nimrat: Baptised? I don't know what baptised means, I!  
*Døpt? Jeg vet ikke hva døpt betyr, jeg.*  
 (The teacher goes to Nimrat in order to explain what 'to baptise' means).

Teacher: To baptise xx small drops of water xxx.  
*Å døpe xx små dråper med vann xxx.*

At the same time as he explains, he points to one of the pictures in her CRE book that shows the baptism of Jesus, a picture made by the Italian painter Piero della Francesca (1419-1492). After that, Nimrat starts on

her drawing, trying hard to copy the picture in the book in the best possible way.

The term 'baptising' and the related term 'baptist' were used ten times in the written text the teacher read for the pupils, and eighteen times in the oral discourse. In order to understand the meaning of the subject matter presented, it is of course crucial to understand these terms. For Nimrat, 'baptism' is apparently not part of her everyday experiences and is also not an everyday concept in her discourse community. As mentioned earlier, pupils' individual life histories will influence what they know and whether they will be able to make sense of what is said during classroom discourse. Who is Nimrat and what is her biography?

Nimrat is an eight-year-old girl of Indian Sikh descent. Her mother tongue is Panjabi. She lived in India with her mother and grandparents until she was five, which means that she has lived in Norway for only three years. Nimrat is a very serious pupil, who works very hard on her school tasks. She is one of the highest achieving language minority pupils in this class, and also one of the pupils who most often asks for a clarification when she does not understand what is being discussed during classroom discourse.

Baptism is an essential part of Norwegian culture and, for most Norwegian children, baptising is part of their cultural knowledge, meaning an implicit understanding of 'culture as knowledge'. Following Gullbekk (2002), we want to distinguish here between two types of cultural knowledge. First there is 'culture as knowledge', which comprises what the child directly experiences and learns in his or her life world and which originates in situated, experience-based, internal notions. These notions are similar to what Vygotsky (1967) refers to as spontaneous or everyday concepts. And then there is 'knowledge about culture', which consists of explicit statements, taught by teachers or learned from written texts, leading to a more generalised knowledge of Christianity or Islam, for example. These statements resemble Vygotsky's scientific concepts, which are more abstract and systematised concepts, mostly mediated by means of formal education, often under decontextualised conditions. These two kinds of concepts are not unrelated, scientific concepts often build on spontaneous concepts.

While to baptise refers to an everyday concept, that is, a concept learned directly by personal experience for most ethnic Norwegian children, it might be more like a scientific concept for non-Christian

language minority children, who primarily encounter the concept in educational settings where it is mediated verbally, i.e., explicitly taught.

The classroom discourse in the CRE lesson was dominated by the triadic structure of Initiation-Response-Evaluation sequences, in which the teacher asks a question, the pupils respond, and the teacher comments on the response – a comment that is often evaluative in nature. Primarily Silje and some other high-achieving pupils with a majority background answered the teachers' questions. The teacher asked the pupils several times whether they understood the content of the story, and nobody indicated that they did not understand. The teacher asked the pupils to explain what to baptise means, but they seemed to have difficulties explaining it explicitly. When Silje finally came up with the right answer (not only explaining the act of baptising but also the meaning of it), the teacher then assumed that, or at least acted as if, the rest of the class also knew, or in any case had learnt now through listening to Silje, what baptism stands for.

Silje's contribution to the discourse shows that she obviously is part of a discourse community where baptism is an everyday concept, also the subsequent discussion among some of the other children whether they had been baptised or not shows they knew what the term stands for, at least implicitly. Since the teacher did not check any further to determine whether or not the other pupils understood the term, it went unnoticed that some of them did not share the assumed common knowledge. Since the meaning of baptism serves as the starting point for other concepts as well, pupils might subsequently also drop out of the discourse when new concepts related to baptism are introduced later on.

### 14.3 Pupil time

It is not only during CRE lessons that 'baptism' is the subject of discussion. Since baptism is an everyday concept for many of the pupils in class 3A, it might spontaneously turn up in classroom discourse. The following example from pupil time on Monday, 29 May 2000, confirms this assumption. During the first two periods on Monday, which are Norwegian lessons, the pupils usually get some time to share their weekend experiences with their peers. The episode below is taken from Pupil Time during a regular NL1 lesson, where all the pupils but Sona

speak Norwegian as their first language. Jon teaches Norwegian in the regular class.

Episode 3.8: Godmother

Tomas: My godmother had to be cut in her mouth at the dentist's.  
*Gudmoren min måtte skjæres i munnen hos tannlegen.*

Teacher: Why Tomas?  
*Hvorfor det Tomas?*

Tomas: xxx (talking very low).  
*xxx.*

Sona: What is a godmother?  
*Hva er en gudmor?*

Pupil: I know who it is.  
*Jeg vet hvem det er.*

Sona: Is it an aunt or is it xx what is it?  
*Er det en tante eller er det xx hva er det?*

Teacher: Tomas' mother, isn't it?  
*Mammaen til Tomas, ikke sant?*

Pupils: No, it is not that!  
*Nei, det er det ikke!*

Teacher: Who is it then?  
*Hvem er det da?*

Tomas: It is my godmother.  
*Det er gudmora mi*

Teacher: Godmother, okay.  
*Gudmora, OK.*

Sona: But what is it?  
*Men hva er det?*

Teacher: She had to have her mouth cut.  
*Hun måtte skjære i munnen sin.*

Sona: What is a godmother?  
*Hva er gudmor?*

Pupil: Don't you know that?  
*Vet ikke du det?*

Maria: Is there anyone who does not know what a godmother is?  
*Er det noen som ikke vet hva en gudmor er?*

Teacher: What is it then Maria?  
*Hva er det for noe Maria?*

Maria: xxx baptism.  
*xxx dåp.*



- Teacher: Can you explain it Tomas?  
*Kan du forklare det Tomas?*
- Tomas: It is a lady who carries you to the baptising. Baptism.  
*Det er en dame som bærer deg til døpen. Dåpen.*
- Teacher: Uhm, okay. Mette, do you want to say something?  
*Hmm, OK. Mette, er det noe du vil fortelle?*
- Mette: No.  
*Nei.*

Then Maria tells the class about a birthday party she attended, and Stian mentions that he played soccer. Finally Silje, Ida, Ka, and Veronica give a lengthy account of their gospel choir trip to Bergen during the weekend.

The pupils in 3A, language majority pupils as well as language minority pupils, rarely expressed themselves as directly as Sona did in the excerpt above, that they did not understand what was being discussed in classroom discourse. Several times Sona asked for an explanation of the term 'godmother' and did not give up till she got an answer to her question. The answer, however, only refers to observable, probably experience-based, characteristics of a godmother during the baptism ritual and not to the symbolic meaning behind being a godmother. Who is Sona then?

Sona, an eight-year-old language minority girl, was born in Norway but her parents are from Africa. She is the only minority pupil in 3A following the regular Norwegian lessons. Sona is a Muslim, attending Koran classes twice a week, and her knowledge of concepts related to Christian rituals might therefore be limited. Non-Christian minority pupils might hear such concepts for the first time within a school context, i.e., out of the context of 'everyday' life. Language majority pupils such as Silje, Ida, Ka, and Veronica, who participate in Christian events as active gospel choir members, will however be able to develop experience-based concepts related to Christian rituals.

The language comprehension problems language minority children experience in classroom discourse do not always surface. Pupils' misunderstanding or not understanding of the discourse topic might be difficult to discover for the teacher as long as (s)he is not directly 'confronted' with it as in the cases of Nimrat and Sona. Both girls are high-achieving minority pupils, and are among the few pupils asking for

clarification. However, this time, Nimrat did not indicate that she did not understand until she was asked to carry out a task related to the subject matter discussed.

## 14.4 Conclusions

Learning, language, and culture are closely connected. It is important to be aware of the central role language and culture play in the processes of making meaning in the classroom. This applies especially to multicultural classrooms where pupils have diverse cultural backgrounds and a varying competence in the language of instruction.

As the discourse excerpts show, cultural knowledge is often taken for granted in subject matter lessons (cf. discourse as instruction) as well as in sharing everyday experiences during classroom discourse (cf. discourse as communication), both by teachers and peer pupils. Maria, a majority pupil, wondered whether it is really possible that there are people who do not know what a godmother is. Norwegian cultural knowledge, as knowledge of Christian religious ceremonies, for instance, is not common knowledge for all pupils and requires explicit explanation. Disregarding the cultural dimensions of the language used in classroom discourse might lead to misunderstandings and excluding certain pupils from participating in the discourse. In this respect, Bernstein (1972:149) underlines that “if the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher”.



## Chapter 15

### Becoming 'literate' in mathematics

#### 15.1 Introduction

In this chapter, some of the specific linguistic demands minority pupils encounter in the mathematics lessons are discussed.

Learning mathematics poses many challenges to both majority and minority pupils in Norway. Norwegian primary school pupils in general compare rather poorly with pupils from other countries in international studies of mathematics achievement, such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (see Lie, Kjærnsli & Brekke 1997). This study also revealed that Norwegian minority pupils achieve even lower than their majority peers, and at the age of thirteen they lag behind approximately one year as far as mathematics is concerned. Although researchers and educators agree that educational problems with regard to minority pupils are complex, they stress that the children's second language proficiency is a decisive factor for their school success.

Language plays a central role in processes of teaching and learning and this applies to the teaching and learning of mathematics too. One of the problems of language in mathematics is that the meaning to be transmitted is often complex and the terms used can be ambiguous, i.e., have multiple meanings. Language minority pupils, whose first language is not the language of instruction, might have difficulties interpreting the terms and phrases used in mathematics lessons as the teacher or the textbook intended them.

On the basis of current views of learning mathematics, Moschkovich (2002) described and explored three perspectives on bilingual pupils' mathematics learning and its relation to language. In her discussion, she focuses on three different aspects of language, i.e., language as vocabulary, as discourse, and as registers. Registers refer to stylistic varieties of language, sets of meanings appropriate to the different functions they have in particular contexts, e.g., everyday and mathematics registers. Moschkovich's aspects of language show similarities with the three-dimensional dynamic of learning and teaching mathematics in multi-

lingual classrooms Adler (2001:111) refers to: access to the language of instruction, mathematical discourse, and classroom discourse.

In the light of the educational challenges of mathematics teaching and learning outlined above, discourse episodes of mathematics lessons in Class 3A in which language-related problems occurred were transcribed and analyzed. Two of these episodes will be presented and discussed below. While in the first episode the emphasis is on language as vocabulary, the focus in the second episode is on classroom discourse as mathematical discourse, i.e., talking to learn and learning to talk mathematics. These distinctions are analytical; the discourse episodes will show that language dimensions as vocabulary, registers, and discourse overlap in classroom practice.

## 15.2 Mathematics

Karin, the form teacher, taught mathematics to class 3A for four periods a week. Nasreen, the bilingual Norwegian-Urdu teacher, usually assisted Karin in her mathematics teaching for three periods. When Nasreen was present, the class often split into two groups, which were then taught in separate classrooms.

A number of the tasks in the mathematics workbook *Tusen Million* (Gjerdrum & Kristiansen 1998), meaning 'Thousand Millions', the 3A pupils used, are presented as *tekstoppgaver* (word problems). In a typical word problem, two or more related units of informational text are presented and the pupil is asked to come with a missing number by carrying out the appropriate mathematical operation. On page 30, for instance, a word problem says,

"I found 9 chanterelles and 8 penny buns, Maria said. Maria found \_\_\_\_ mushrooms altogether." (Gjerdrum & Kristiansen 1998:30)

This type of mathematical task is often used in so-called 'realistic' mathematics, which intends to start from pupils' own experience and in which daily situations have to be mathematized. The mathematics syllabus of the Norwegian curriculum states in this respect,

"The syllabus seeks to create close links between school mathematics and mathematics in the outside world. Day-to-day experience, play and experiment help to build up its concepts and terminology." (Curriculum 1999:165)

The episode presented here is part of a mathematics lesson taught by Nasreen on 5 October 1999 in the regular class. Karin was not present during this lesson since she had to attend an important meeting involving one of her pupils. The children worked individually on different tasks in their mathematics workbook. Nasreen walked about the classroom and assisted individual pupils asking for help. In Episode 3.9, Ivan asks Nasreen for help with the word problem about mushrooms mentioned above.

Episode 3.9: Chanterelles and penny buns

- Ivan: Nasreen, I don't understand what one has to do here (low voice).  
*Nasreen, jeg skjønner ikke hva man skal gjøre her.*
- Teacher: Here it is. I found nine, get up. Can you read this? I ...  
*Her er det. Jeg fant ni, reis deg opp. Kan du lese det? Jeg ...*
- Ivan: Found nine cha-chan-te-rel-les (Ivan has difficulties reading the text and teacher now joins him reading aloud) and eight penny buns, Maria said. Maria found ... mushrooms altogether.  
*Fant ni ka-kan-ta-rel-ler og åtte stei:nsopp, sopp, sa Maria. Maria fant ... sopp i alt.*
- Teacher: How many did she find altogether? Now you have to add them together.  
*Hvor mange fant hun i alt? Nå skal du legge de sammen.*
- Ivan: Eight?  
*Åtte?*
- Teacher: No, first you had these. These are also mushrooms. Nine plus eight.  
*Nei, først var det den. Den er også sopp. Ni pluss åtte.*
- Ivan: Ooh (intonation expresses understanding).  
*Ååh.*
- Teacher: Yes, these are also mushrooms. These are also called mushrooms.  
*Ja, det er også sopp. Den heter sopp den også.*  
(Ivan now starts to compute with the help of a counting frame Nasreen had given him when he asked for assistance earlier this lesson. Finally, Ivan arrives at an answer).
- Ivan: Ready.  
*Ferdig.*

Teacher: Are you ready?  
*Du er ferdig?*  
Ivan: Seventeen!  
*Sytten!*

The demands this kind of mathematics task make are rather complex since they involve an interplay of cognitive, linguistic, and cultural knowledge. The solving of word problems in mathematics can be a difficult task for all pupils, but especially for language minority pupils. It is not because they do not have the mathematical abilities, but because they might be unable to carry out the right operation due to language problems in such areas as vocabulary or register.

Introducing word problems in meaningful situations, connected to real-world contexts, might not be so meaningful for all pupils. Problems referring to natural contexts of Norwegian flora and fauna, dealing with various kinds of wild berries, mushrooms, or fish can be a culturally less relevant and a rather meaningless context for some pupils, pupils living in the inner city of Oslo, for instance. Ivan seemed to understand that penny buns are mushrooms, since his initial answer, “eight”, referred to the number of penny buns. The direct translation of the Norwegian term for penny bun, *steinsopp*, means ‘pebble mushroom’, thus indicating that it is a mushroom, this is not the case with *kantareller* (chanterelles) though. When Nasreen explained “first you had these, these are also mushrooms”, and at the same time told Ivan to add up the numbers nine and eight, he finally understood what the problem actually asked for.

Minority pupils might also have problems interpreting the math task: What does it actually ask? It does not have to mean that the words causing problems are scientific concepts such as multiply, subtract, or odd and even numbers. According to Anghilleri (1993:99), everyday concepts such as ‘less than’, ‘each’, and ‘altogether’, may also interfere with pupils’ understanding of word problems. Norwegian concepts with particular mathematical functions and meanings might thus cause problems for language minority pupils. Learning mathematics also involves translating everyday concepts into mathematical ones and interpreting multiple meanings across the everyday and mathematics registers. A familiar concept such as ‘altogether’ might confuse pupils trying to solve the math task. Ivan’s “I don’t understand what one has to do here” can also relate to this language dimension of the word problem: what is the meaning of the word ‘altogether’ in a math context. It is

actually this part Nasreen first referred to in her explanation: "How many did she find altogether? Now you have to add them together". When Ivan then answered "eight", Nasreen realised that he had left out the chanterelles from the mushrooms, and then she focused on the vocabulary part, telling him that chanterelles are mushrooms.

Word problems might put high demands on pupils' language skills. In order to make sense of this kind of mathematical task, it might therefore be necessary to expand minority pupils' vocabulary and terminology, which means making explicit the implicit understandings word problems are based on.

### 15.3 Classroom discourse as mathematical discourse

Usually class 3A is split up into two groups when having Math, but on Thursday, 7 October 1999, Karin and Nasreen co-taught the class. Karin had written the text of a song on the blackboard. It is a new song, a math song called *Tiervenner* (Ten-friends), which she copied from last year's teacher's manual, *Tusen Millioner* (Gjerdrum & Skovdahl 1997:129). When we spoke with Karin after the lesson, she explained that she introduced the song to enhance the pupils' awareness of what number ten stands for, since she had realised that some of her pupils had problems when working on tasks involving units of ten. The pupils were working with numbers ranging from 0-20 during this period. Adding up numbers whose sum is greater than ten is easier when they know when *tieroverganger* (ten transitions) occur, i.e., knowing which numbers add up to ten, a mathematical operation like  $7 + 8 = \dots$  then becomes  $7 + (3 + 5) = 15$ .

Karin tells the class they will sing the song she has written on the blackboard (see Figure 3.3). She stands in front of the class, plays the guitar, and starts singing. After having sung the first verse alone, Karin tells the class to join her, the pupils carefully join in singing the first verse, with the number pair 9 and 1 as ten-friends.



*Tiervenner*

*Jeg heter 1 og jeg leter og jeg leter  
etter en venn mon tro hva han heter.  
9 heter jeg her har du meg  
jeg er tiervenn med deg  
1 og 9 til sammen blir vi ti  
vi er tiervenner vi.*

(We are ten-friends

My name is 1 and I'm looking and I'm looking  
for a friend I wonder what his name is  
9 is my name here I am  
I am your ten-friend  
1 and 9 together we make ten  
we are ten-friends we.)

Figure 3.3: The song written on the blackboard

Episode 3.10: Ten-friends

- Teacher: Next verse, then I will erase a little, I'll erase that number one.  
*Neste vers, da skal jeg pusse ut litt, jeg pusser ut det ettallet.*
- Silje: And number nine.  
*Og nitallet.*
- Teacher: And write two, and so I have to take away the number nine.  
Yes, what do I then put there instead, Silje?  
*Og skriver to, og så må jeg ta vekk nitallet. Ja, hva skal jeg sette da, Silje?*
- Silje: Eight. And the other number nine (other pupils join in as well now).  
*Åtte. Og det andre nitallet.*
- Teacher: Eight, and then I take away one and nine there. Two, eight.  
*Åtte, og så må jeg ta bort en og ni der. To, åtte.*
- Teacher: (singing) My name is two and I'm looking and I'm looking for a friend I wonder what my name is two is my name here (the teacher realises she has made a mistake and stops singing).  
*Jeg heter to og jeg leter og jeg leter, etter en venn mon tro hva jeg heter. Jeg heter to her.*
- Pupils: Eight there.  
*Åtte der.*
- Teacher: Two and two is four.  
*To og to blir fire det.*
- Pupils: Yes.  
*Ja.*

Teacher: Okay, over again then. My name is two and I'm looking and I'm looking for a friend I wonder what his name is. Eight is my name here I am I am your ten-friend. Two and eight together we make ten, we are ten-friends we.  
*OK, om igjen da. Jeg heter to og jeg leter og jeg leter etter en venn mon tro hva han heter. Åtte heter jeg og her har du meg jeg er tiervenn med deg. To og åtte til sammen er vi ti, vi er tiervenner vi.*

The pupils now enthusiastically participate in the singing. The second verse is now sung without interruptions.

Teacher: I now want someone to come forward and erase something, and put something new. (Teacher pulls a nametag from a little tin cup and reads the name of the next pupil to come forward). Fatima, do you want to do that? Yes? Fatima erases and writes a little.  
*Nå vil jeg at en skal komme frem og pusse ut da, og sette på noe nytt. Fatima, vil du det? Ja? Fatima pusser ut og skriver litt.*

Fatima comes to the blackboard. She replaces the number pairs '2 and 8' by '3 and 7'. The teacher and the pupils sing the next verse together. Then she pulls a new nametag and asks: "Sona, can you make a new one?" Now Sona comes to the blackboard. She erases the first number and writes '10', but then hesitates.

Teacher: It could have been a zero then, but that is so lonely. Yes xxx when it is only ten. Yes. Or do you have any other suggestions?  
*Det kunne ha vært en null da, men det er så ensomt da. Ja xxx hvis det bare er ti. Ja. Eller har du andre forslag?*

Sona: (Erases the '10' she wrote and writes a '4' instead).

Teacher: A four comes there, yes. Then there will be a six there, ... mm ... (confirming intonation), and a six.  
*Kom det en fire der, ja. Da må det bli en sekser de, ... mm ..., og en sekser.*

The teacher and the children sing the song once more, now with the numbers '4 and 6' as ten-friends. Michael is the next pupil to come

forward, he writes number 5 twice. The class sings the ten-friend song again. The children sing and have fun. They seem to be having a good time.

- Teacher: And then the song actually ends here.  
*Og da slutter faktisk sangen der.*
- Pupils: Yes! (calling out).  
*Ja!*
- Teacher: For then we have had one and nine, next we had two and eight, three and seven, four and six (meanwhile writing the numbers in pairs on the blackboard).  
*For da har vi hatt eneren og nieren, så har vi hatt toeren og åtteren, treeren og sjueren, fireren og sekseren.*
- Pupil: What about the tenner xx? (interrupting the teacher).  
*Hva med tieren xx?*
- Teacher: And a fiver plus ... (adding '5 + 5' to the numbers on the blackboard).  
*Og femmeren pluss ...*
- Pupil: A fiver?  
*Femmeren?*
- Teacher: Five, yes. Could it have been ...  
*Fem, ja. Kunne det ha vært ...*
- Pupil: Ten and zero.  
*Ti og null.*
- Teacher: You would like to have ten plus zero then?  
*Ti og null ville dere ha hatt da?*
- Pupils: No. Yes.  
*Nei. Ja.*
- Teacher: Ten plus ... xx. Is it my name is zero or my name is ten?  
*Ti pluss ... xx. Er det jeg heter zero eller jeg heter ti?*
- Pupils: My name is zero xxx.  
*Jeg heter null xxx.*
- Teacher: All right. (Writes '0 + 10' on the blackboard).  
*Javel.*

Then Karin starts playing the song once more and the class joins in singing: "My name is zero, zero and ten together we make ten, we are ten-friends we."

A little later, Karin lifts her hand and puts up nine fingers: "Now I want you to put up xxx as many fingers as are lacking. When I have nine

here how many fingers do you have to put up then?" One of the pupil answers "nine". Karin asks: "Ida?" "One," Ida replies. "A one," Karin repeats. "Can you do it now, but they have to be ten together," Karin underlines. "And when I do this?" Karin shows eight fingers this time. "Two," Michael replies. "Show me, look at Maria." Karin and Nasreen check whether the pupils have understood. "Okay, yes," Karin comments. Then she tells neighbouring pupils, two by two, to make new combinations of numbers by putting up their fingers. Both teachers walk around and check whether the children have managed to become ten-friends and assist when necessary. The pupils chat in a lively manner during the mathematical finger game.

As we can see in the episode above, creating and negotiating meaning in mathematics lessons might involve the use of different resources, such as songs, games, and everyday experiences. Learning mathematical discourse is not merely a matter of learning vocabulary or learning the mathematics register; multiple resources for communicating mathematically can be used, e.g., play, songs, pupils' first language, gestures, objects, everyday experiences. This perspective contributes to a more complicated and expanded view of what counts as mathematical competence (Moschkovich 2002).

The mathematical construct 'ten-friends' was introduced by means of singing and teacher-led class discourse. Introducing a new concept by using a song can be an effective way to get the pupils' joint attention and to establish intersubjectivity, which will make it easier to put new ideas across. When introducing the math song to the class, the teacher explained neither the idea behind it nor the concept 'ten-friends'. It was probably assumed that since the children are familiar with the terms 'ten' and 'friends', they would also understand the mathematical term 'ten-friends'.

Metaphors based on everyday experiences can be both resources and obstacles for understanding mathematical concepts. The use of pupils' own experiences and previous knowledge usually facilitates pupils' understanding of a new concept. Fatima, a low-achieving language minority girl, managed to carry out the task on the blackboard, though she got some help from her peer pupils when she had to fill in '7'. Then Sona, a high-achieving minority girl, came to the blackboard to propose the next pair of ten-friends. She first wrote '10', but when she was about to fill in the missing ten-friend, she hesitated. Karin commented that it was "rather lonely" for number ten to have zero as a friend, interpreting

it as having no friends. Sona then changed her mind, erased '10', and wrote the numbers '4 and 6' instead. The teacher's dismissal of ten and zero was a result of a personal interpretation, a reification of the symbolic ten-friends as real friends. Karin's empathic approach, which usually creates a positive learning environment, might in this way hinder the meaning construction of ten-friends to a more abstract level and counteract the appropriation of the term 'ten-friends' as a concept that belongs to the mathematics register.

Karin showed, by her follow-up of the children's initiatives, a dialogic model of instruction. The teacher appreciated and valued the children's initiatives, e.g., correcting the teacher when she makes a mistake, putting '2 and 2' together instead of '2 and 8'. Moreover, when Karin listed the different number combinations on the blackboard and concluded that the song ended there, the children disagreed with her. The pupils started negotiations with the teacher, resulting in the teacher accepting the '10 + 0' combination. The pupils' comments actually reflect an understanding of numbers as mathematical objects. The excerpt shows us how mathematical understandings are interactively constituted in this classroom as a result of the activities of the participants in the classroom dialogue. Dialogic classroom discourse, which includes the pupil's interpretations and experiences, both shapes and promotes pupil learning (Nystrand 1997). Nystrand emphasises, while referring to Bakhtin, that understanding can only develop when teachers respond to pupils, not just pupils to teachers.

Karin's way of teaching mathematics is not only a consequence of her personal preferences; her approach is also in accordance with the Norwegian curriculum. The mathematics syllabus of the Norwegian curriculum states:

"Mathematics has a variety of aspects, and learning takes place in a variety of ways. Pupils' experience and previous knowledge and the assignments they are given are important elements in the learning process. Learners construct their own mathematical concepts. In that connection it is important to emphasise discussion and reflection." (Curriculum 1999:167)

### **15.4 Masking comprehension problems in the language of instruction in the mathematics classroom**

The preceding episodes showed how difficulties in solving a mathematical task may be connected to problems in comprehending the words in which the task was formulated. Some of these comprehension difficulties, furthermore, may remain un-communicated by the children and unnoticed by the teacher (see Tuveng 2001; Tuveng & Wold forthcoming). Specific analyses of the difficulties the children encountered in mathematics lead up to such a conclusion. In the analyses we explored in what respect the children's difficulties were related to their Norwegian language competence and to communicational patterns in the classroom more broadly. These analyses focused on one of the two groups that the class was divided into in some of the mathematical lessons. The group consisted of eleven pupils, six girls and five boys, five of whom were language minority children and six language majority children. The group consisted of children that were, according to the teacher, "quick" and "not so quick", and both children who kept their things orderly and children who did not. Thus, the group mirrored the complexity of the class as a whole. Karin, the form teacher, was in charge of the group studied.

The data consisted of observations accompanied by audio-recordings, interviews with the children and the teacher, and the results from the more formalised testing, including testing for language comprehension, reported in Chapter 9. During the spring of 2000, seven double math lessons, each lasting about ninety minutes, were recorded, giving approximately ten hours of observation. In each lesson, the researcher focused on two pre-selected children. Later on the same day, she interviewed these children about how they had experienced the lesson and how they had coped with any difficulties they had experienced. The teacher was interviewed towards the end of the period of data collection about her perception and interpretation of the problems encountered by the children.

The impression from these hours of observations was primarily that there were very few problems of any kind coming to the surface. There were very few signs of language comprehension problems by way of children saying they did not understand or the teacher explaining words or phrases. The atmosphere in the classroom seemed, furthermore, to be

such that the pupils could be expected to feel free to come forward with any problems they might experience. But when the classroom interactions were studied more closely, reflecting on the pattern of results from the different methods, the picture changed in important ways.

In about ten hours of observation, only one single example of an explicit language comprehension problem was registered. The example came from one of the language minority girls trying to solve a problem presented by the formulations "My hat it has three edges. How many edges do five hats like this have altogether?" (Gjerdrum & Kristiansen 1998). The task was accompanied by an illustration showing a rabbit wearing a hat with three edges. The language minority girl asked her friend sitting next to her, a language majority girl, what "edges" are. As part of the following communication, the language majority girl explained "Oh this is an edge" showing her an edge or pattern she had drawn in her own math book. Such an edge or pattern could also be called *kanter* in Norwegian. The language minority girl did not manage the mathematical task. Thus lack of understanding of one word might have interrupted the whole math task. The example also illustrates how the multiple meanings of the word *kanter* contributed to the difficulties by making it harder for the child to receive an explanation that fitted the context.

Although this was the only language comprehension problem observable in the research period, two of the language minority girls explicitly said in the interview that they experienced some language comprehension problems in class. These two girls earned higher scores on the language comprehension tests than the other language minority children in the group. Thus, it seems rather unlikely that these two girls in reality encounter more language comprehension problems in the classroom than the other language minority pupils. On the contrary, it seems reasonable to infer that the other language minority children experience even more problems, though we were not informed about them in the interview nor did we observe them directly, except for one instance. What we directly observe and are told, then, does not seem to tell the true story of the problems the children experience.

This state of affairs made us wonder what the conditions must be fulfilled if children's language comprehension problems in the language of instruction are to be directly observable or in other ways communicated by the child. Most probably some of these conditions are connected to characteristics of the child and others are connected to the

more or less explicit rules for communication that had developed in the classroom.

To express language comprehension problems in the interview seems to require a rather advanced metacognition, wherein the children must reflect about their problems and interpret them as related to problems with comprehending the language. It also requires that the children's language competence in Norwegian enables them to communicate about the problems and, in addition, that they are willing to do so. Most probably these conditions have not been fulfilled for every language minority child. When it comes to the rules for communication in this classroom, the teacher's interpretation of the children's problems is important. From the interview, it turns out that the teacher primarily attributes the children's problems in the mathematical lessons to problems with the mathematical operations as such. She also said that she expected the pupils to tell her if they did not understand some words. Thus, she was rather reluctant to attribute math problems to language comprehension problems, although she might do so in some few instances. How she interpreted the situation influenced how she reacted to it, and in accordance with what she said in the interview, she did not communicate to the pupils that she expected them to have any difficulties understanding what she said or the content of the written text. During the observations, the teacher did not explain any words other than more specific mathematical terms such as 'area' and 'quadrangle'.

Neither the language majority nor minority pupils asked the teacher about the meaning of any word during the ten-hour observational period. The only explicit question about word meaning came from a language minority girl and was directed towards a language majority friend. This is so even though it is reasonable to believe that some of the children experienced language comprehension problems that could have interfered with the solution of the mathematical task. The children did not focus on language comprehension problems, but neither did the teacher. By what she said and did not say, the teacher acted out the norms of communication at work in this classroom. By her example, she showed her pupils that questions related to language comprehension were rather irrelevant to their mathematical lesson. The children, partly as a reaction to these implicit norms, did not ask for the meaning of words thereby strengthening the teacher's interpretation that the comprehension of the language of instruction is not an important problem. It is therefore suggested that the pupils and their teacher in this case co-create



a situation where problems related to language comprehension become relatively invisible. One consequence of this joint under-communication is that problems in language comprehension were not attended to and worked on in class. The results of these analyses indicate that it is also necessary to explore the communicational norms in classrooms to fully understand the relationship between competence in the language of instruction and mathematical achievement.

## 15.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, we called attention to and discussed some specific linguistic demands pupils encounter in mathematics lessons. By studying the episodes of classroom discourse, we gain an understanding of the decisive role language plays in the mathematics classroom and realise then that this cannot but entail language-related comprehension problems for pupils not fully mastering the language of instruction. The understandings mathematical discourse is based on are often implicit and depend on the interpretation of word meanings that are multiple, situated, and cultural. The language used in mathematics lessons can therefore be difficult to grasp, especially for language minority pupils.

Helping pupils to become 'literate' in mathematics might require giving linguistic support to minority pupils during mathematics instruction. Teachers need to make explicit what too often is left implicit in the ambiguous language used in mathematics lessons. Observations and recordings of the mathematics lessons in class 3A reveal that the teachers primarily gave explanations to individual pupils asking for help, while probably more pupils could benefit from these explanations.

Pupils' mathematical learning is influenced by both the mathematical practices and the social norms institutionalised by a particular classroom community (Cobb, Wood & Yackel 1996). The regularities of classroom social interaction will influence the forms of discourse established in the classroom, regarding when and how to ask questions, for instance. We also found that both teacher and pupils undercommunicated language-related problems in the mathematics classroom.

Adler (2001:115) called attention to explicit mathematics language teaching, which implies "that language itself becomes the object of attention in the mathematics class and a resource in the teaching-learning process". She writes further that the teachers in her study experienced

that explicit mathematics language teaching did help, and it benefited all pupils, not just language minority pupils. Though explicit mathematics language teaching is favourable, it is not appropriate in all cases, according to Adler (2001). She drew attention to the dilemma of transparency in relation to language visibility in multicultural mathematics classrooms. Transparency in the practice of teaching mathematics involves both visibility and invisibility, she argues:

“For talk to be a resource for mathematics learning it needs to be transparent; learners must be able to see it and use it. They must be able to focus on language per se when necessary, but they must also be able to render it invisible while using it as means for building mathematical knowledge.” (Adler 2001:133)

A fine balance in the shift of focus between mathematical language and the mathematical problem, which are interrelated, is thus required when teaching mathematics in the multicultural classroom.



## **Chapter 16**

### **Mother tongue education**

#### **16.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to shed light on the conditions for the teaching and use of minority languages within classes and schools and to discuss whether and to what extent, local solutions are in accordance with the guidelines laid down by central and local authorities.

Data were collected at two primary schools in Oslo (*Ekelund* and *Vardåsen*) and one school in a rural municipality not very far from the capital (*Bjørkelia*). In all three schools there was a relatively high percentage of minority pupils, 45, 43, and 14 per cent, respectively. In the country as a whole, 6.5 per cent of the pupils' mother tongue is a language other than Norwegian. The data consist of semi-structured interviews with 21 language minority pupils in the third grade, six mother tongue/bilingual subject teachers, and two head teachers and two deputy heads. Among other things, the pupils were asked about their abilities in their mother tongue and Norwegian, both oral and written. They were also asked about their preferences between the two languages. Some of the questions we asked both the teachers and the head teachers were connected to the use of the school's bilingual teachers resources. They were also asked how they viewed the mother tongue/bilingual education, and the teachers were asked about the use of the mother tongue both in and out of the classroom. The six teachers also wrote reports about a longer period of teaching in the classes in question. In addition, we were present as observers at some of the lessons in the same period.

#### **16.2 Documents**

The research was carried out at a time of great change in the Norwegian schools. The pupils we interviewed had entered the school in 1997, and therefore belonged to the first generation of pupils starting school at the age of six in Norway, having ten years of compulsory schooling ahead of

them (see Chapter 8). In the second half of the 1990s various documents were also published about education in a multicultural society (NOU 1995; Stortingsmelding 1996, 1998).

In the Norwegian White Paper (Stortingsmelding 1996), it is stated that the school should cater to the needs of language minorities. Pupils who belong to language minorities should be given the necessary instruction to enable them to pursue an education and a career. As a means to secure the minorities' rights to education in NL2 and in the mother tongue, the state refunds parts of the municipality's expenses. For the teaching of minority languages, the refunds cover both the mother tongue teaching as such and the bilingual subject matter teaching, but it is the responsibility of the municipality to determine the specific use of the money.

The curriculum for the ten-year compulsory school, *L97* (Curriculum 1999), gives the framework for all the school subjects. But the fact that the curriculum for NL2 appeared one year after the other subject curricula and the mother tongue curriculum did not appear until three years later might indicate that these subjects were not given the same priority as the rest of the curriculum.

According to *L97*,

"Pupils with a minority language as their first language are entitled to courses in Norwegian as a second language. They may also be taught their own language, both as a subject and as a medium for gaining access to other subject areas. Pupils should attend ordinary Norwegian classes as soon as their Norwegian is of such a level that they will be able to benefit from the teaching of the various subjects in Norwegian. There are separate syllabuses for both Norwegian as a second language and mother tongue teaching." (Curriculum 1999: Preface)

The municipalities' obligations to offer mother tongue teaching and teaching in NL2 was also laid down in Section 24 of the Regulations to the Norwegian Education Act (1999) at the time of the study. This was not an invariable rule, however, but only a rule that should be followed "until they have sufficient knowledge of Norwegian to be able to follow the ordinary teaching."

Unquestionably, there was a change in the ideology during the 1990s when it comes to the education of minority pupils. In the curriculum guidelines given ten years earlier, it was stated that

"For the pupils to feel at home in two cultures, they need to become bilingual. It should therefore be the aim of the school to coach the pupils

to a stage where they can function in two languages.” (*Mønsterplan for grunnskolen* 1987)

Today there is no room for this perspective in the curriculum for compulsory education. Instead, more importance is attached to a general right to an education adjusted to the individual’s needs:

“The overall aim of compulsory education in mixed ability and co-educational classes is to offer all pupils an education suited to their individual abilities.” (Curriculum 1999: Preface)

### 16.3 Interviews

Our data from the interviews reveal that there are some basic differences in the approach to the teaching of minority pupils between the rural *Bjørkelia* school and the two schools in Oslo, but there are also differences between these two schools. At *Bjørkelia* nearly all the language minority children receive instruction in and about their mother tongue, according to the usual practice in the municipality. At each of the Oslo schools, there are two teachers providing the bilingual teaching for pupils belonging to only two of about 25 minority languages, a practice which is found in most schools in Oslo.

All the mother tongue teachers at *Bjørkelia*, except one, also teach at one or more other schools in the municipality. Mother tongue education is organised by the local school administration. That is why it is possible for nearly all the pupils in the municipality to receive education in this subject. Owing to the organisation, all the teachers also have their main school where they spend most of the time and where they are considered members of the teaching staff. At *Bjørkelia*, both the headmaster and the deputy head say that the school benefits from having many bilingual teachers, emphasising their importance for the good atmosphere at the school and as a link between the school and the pupils’ homes. At the time of our interview, there were only two minority languages represented in the third grade, Czech and Albanian.

At *Ekelund*, there is some mother tongue teaching in Urdu due to the initiative of the bilingual teacher and the 3A form teacher and to the positive attitude of the headmaster to this teaching. Except from that the resources of the bilingual teachers are divided between the functions as a help in the teaching of subjects matters, primarily mathematics, as an ordinary teacher in mathematics (the Urdu teacher) and as a teacher for a

pupil with special needs, not connected to language (the Somali teacher). A central function of the teachers is also to facilitate communication between the school and the children's homes.

In contrast to *Ekelund*, where some minority pupils get special mother tongue education, there are no mother tongue classes at *Vardåsen*. The two mother tongue (Urdu and Arabic/Berber) teachers, function as bilingual subject matter teachers, and the deputy head said that most of the teaching of the minority pupils takes place within the class, in line with the ideology of the school. A similar ideology was not expressed at *Ekelund*. Our observations and interviews with the teachers, however, reveal that also at *Vardåsen*, some of the teaching is conducted in small groups where the children get mother tongue support in the learning of subject matters. Since one of the teachers has a part of his post as a subject matter teacher in the lower secondary school, there are even fewer resources for bilingual teaching at this school. But both the headmaster and the teachers point to the importance of the teachers serving as adult role models for the pupils and also being a link and mediator between the school and the pupils' homes.

Of the 21 children we interviewed, only six pupils received mother tongue instruction, the three pupils at *Bjørkelia* (two hours a week) and three of the children at *Ekelund* (one hour a week). In addition, three of the four pupils interviewed at *Vardåsen* received bilingual subject matter education.

The interviews revealed that, for all the children, the mother tongue is important as a medium of conversation. The home language is primarily the children's mother tongue, but they also speak some Norwegian, especially with their brothers and sisters. They also speak their mother tongue and Norwegian with friends. The connection to their parents and their country of origin is kept up by means of the mother tongue. In that respect, our results are in line with results from other studies (cf. Boyd *et al.* 1995; Kulbrandstad 1997).

All the pupils, except three, considered Norwegian as their strongest language when it comes to reading and writing. When they talked about understanding and speaking, there was more variation. Most of the children considered their oral competence to be equally strong in both languages. Some of the others consider their mother tongue – some Norwegian – to be their best language.

## 16.4 Conclusions

According to the data from this research and the main research at *Ekelund*, it seems to be arbitrary if, and to what extent, the language minority pupils receive instruction adapted to their needs. It is evident that at schools with only two mother tongue teachers, the first criterion for getting bilingual support or teaching is that you belong to the 'right' language group. Even then the support might be minor because limited resources have to be divided among many pupils with different needs. Of our three schools, only *Bjørkelia* seems to aim at equality in the pupils' opportunity to receive teaching in their mother tongue.

Since the school documents and the official regulations state the municipalities' obligations to give mother tongue education, it might be assumed that this education would have had a strong position in Norway. Even so, the rather great diversity, not only from one municipality to another, but also between schools in the same city, seems to be possible because of the lack of distinct regulations and recommendations in official documents. For instance, in our previous reference to Section 24 in Administrative regulation to the Education Act it is stated that the pupils have a right to mother tongue education "until they have sufficient knowledge in Norwegian to be able to follow the ordinary education" – a formulation giving ample room for various interpretations.





## **Chapter 17**

### **Discussion**

#### **17.1 Introduction**

A special characteristic of this research project is that it mainly focused on observations from one Norwegian classroom. Given this fact, the following questions easily arise: To what extent does the practice observed in this classroom correspond to the guidelines put forward in the national curriculum, and how typical is what we have observed of what goes on in other Norwegian classrooms at the same grade level? Reflections related to such questions have already been included in the presentation of the two rhyming episodes (see Chapter 11). In this chapter, these questions are discussed in relation to two characteristics of the classroom we observed. Firstly, the rather high level of activity, including frequent play, in the classroom (Section 17.2), and, secondly, the special organisation of NL2 lessons (Section 17.3). While the former characteristic is rather general, thus allowing for a comparison to all Norwegian classrooms, the latter is much narrower but nonetheless of central importance for multicultural classrooms. In the discussion, we will also refer to the recurring perspective of language learning. The discussion ends with some remarks concerning how the multicultural composition of this class influenced the content and structure of the education in the classroom.

#### **17.2 Classroom activity**

The research classroom has been described as a rather lively one with an atmosphere sometimes resembling that of a preschool. The activity level was high, and there was ample room for play, singing, talk and movement, and art and craft activities. Sometimes it was also rather noisy in the classroom. It is stressed in the national curriculum that pupils should be active and independent, that they should learn by doing, exploring, and experimenting, and that learning through play is important in the initial grades. These characteristics mirror important changes in

Norwegian education, that is, changes from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, and from a view of education as transmission of knowledge from teachers to children to a view of education emphasising the importance of acting and participating children, involved in creating their own knowledge. Thus, a high level of activity is observed in this class and also stressed in the national curriculum. It also seems to be a common characteristic of many Norwegian classrooms, according to a number of recently published studies by Klette and her co-workers (Klette 2003a) about forms of practices in the classroom after the introduction of *L97* (Curriculum 1999). Their studies are based on data from observations in thirty Norwegian classrooms from grades one, three, six, and nine. Klette (2003b:71) reported that, in general, they observed a high level of activity in all the classrooms.

Tefre & Hauge (1998) seem to present another picture. Their study included information from first, second, and third grade multicultural classrooms in Oslo and is based on observations and interviews with children and teachers. These researchers write:

“What most of the children like the least about the school is the sedentary life as passive receivers that they experience.” (Tefre & Hauge 1998: Summary iii, our translation)

Thus, seemingly contradictory statements may be found when it comes to activity levels in Norwegian classes. The differences may be related to the various times at which the studies were conducted or point to great variation in activity level between different classrooms even today. Another possibility is that the differences are related to the different methods used in the two studies or possibly to differences in the standards of what would be evaluated as an ideal level of activity or even count as ‘activity’. Thus, we cannot know if the differences are ‘real’ or if they can be explained by methodological and/or conceptual matters. But they stimulate further reflection when it comes to the understanding of concepts like ‘activity’ and ‘participation’. When discussing the concept of activity in Chapter 12, we reflected in particular on who was participating. The real, or seemingly contradictory results make us focus on from whose perspective a description is given, from the children participating or from an observer.

It is reasonable to be open to the possibility that information from interviews with children would give another picture of classroom activity than that based on the evaluation of an observer. The national curriculum advocates a high activity level, but it also seems to presuppose that these

activities should be clearly related to the motivation of pupils, mirror their interests, be open to their influence, and thus be goal-directed in ways relevant and understandable for children. In the classes observed by Klette and her co-workers, the learning objectives of the activities were not always self-evident or clearly communicated to the children. The purpose of the activity often seemed unclear both to the children and the observers, and the relationship between doing and learning seemed weak, she states (Klette 2003b:68, 73). The same seems also to hold true for the research class. If this is the case, an observer may register much 'doing'. But when interviewing the children themselves, the pupils may still express a feeling of being 'passive receivers'. Thus, we suggest that children may possibly experience such a feeling not because they are not doing things, but because they have little influence on what they are doing and little understanding of why they are doing it. Perhaps the children in Klette's classes and in our class did not feel as active as the observers saw them.

One type of activity in the classroom is clearly highly influenced by the children themselves, and that is play. The frequent playing and high incidence of playful activities in our classroom seems also in accordance with the national guidelines. There was possibly more play in our third grade classroom than in many others at the same grade level. Tefre & Hauge (1998) reported from their study that the children's opportunities for play were poor. As part of the Klette's study, Hagtvet (2003) provided information about play, but only from the first grade. At this age level, rather much play was observed. As the first year in school in particular is supposed to be influenced by preschool traditions, generalisations from first to third grade classrooms are difficult. What she observed about the quality of play, however, is very interesting and very similar to observations from the present study. Hagtvet focused on literacy-stimulating events in the classroom. She observed, as a general characteristic of the classroom, "surprisingly few examples of child-driven play used as *pedagogical* means" (Hagtvet 2003:203, our translation, italics in original). This general conclusion seems also to be true of our classroom.

To summarise the discussion of activity level – unclear conceptions of activity make it difficult to make detailed comparisons between studies. Even so, it seems reasonable to conclude that a high activity level seems to be a common characteristic in recently studied Norwegian classrooms from an observers' point of view. More conceptual analyses

of the activity concept itself seems necessary, however, to pursue comparisons and, what is more important, to increase reflection among teachers and researchers regarding significant qualitative aspects of different forms of classroom activities, including play.

### **17.3 Organisation of the Norwegian as a second language classes**

Our second theme concerns the organisation of NL2 lessons in the research class. In this class NL2 is taught primarily in separate lessons, and it is the form teacher who is responsible for them. As already noted, there are separate syllabuses for both NL2 and mother tongue teaching for language minority pupils. According to the former, NL2 is entitled to the same number of hours as Norwegian as mother tongue. The way NL2 is organised, however, is not regulated by the syllabus. Consequently, it may be given in integrated classrooms where NL1 and NL2 are taught simultaneously or given in separate, or primarily separate groups, as in the research class where six out of seven hours of Norwegian are given separately to the two groups. The weight and organisation given to NL2 in our class therefore clearly seems to fall within what is required by the national guidelines.

When it comes to the question of how NL2 is typically organised in Norwegian schools, we have little information, and more research is required. In one respect, however, the teaching of NL2 in the research class most probably is atypical. From personal experience and attitudes expressed by teachers, we know that the form teacher seldom teaches this subject herself. As mentioned, in our class she does that, while her co-teacher is responsible for NL1. Normally, the teaching roles would be reversed. It is a deliberate choice of our form teacher to work with the minority pupils. According to her, every teacher can instruct language majority children in Norwegian, but it takes a special competence to teach Norwegian to the language minority group. Our form teacher has such a special competence. By her choice, she also deliberately wants to increase the status of NL2. Her arrangement is not the common one at the school as such. In the prior year, for example, NL2 for third grade pupils was organised quite differently. The NL2 class included language minority pupils from the two parallel classes, and an additional teacher was in charge. Our form teacher's choice is one among several other

indications showing that she has a special commitment when it comes to the education of language minority children.

It is often argued that taking children out of class makes it difficult to integrate the educational content of their lesson with what goes on in the regular class, and that they often lose content elements important to understanding later instruction. Tefre & Hauge (1998) give several examples of such negative consequences of leaving class in their study. But when the form teacher is in charge of the NL2 lessons, and these lessons are scheduled at the same time as the NL1, such consequences are not to be expected and did not characterise the research class.

To separate children into two groups for the Norwegian lessons seems, however, to have other consequences, some positive and some often negative. When the participants in the group are all in a similar process of learning Norwegian, they are not so easily ignored by the teacher because of peers more competent in the Norwegian language. An interesting example is that the communication starting with an orthographic rule concerning the letters *i*, *y*, and *j* took place among language minority children and their teacher in the NL2 lesson. This communication, which was well adjusted to the children's cognitive development, was allowed to develop in this context. According to the teacher, this would probably not have happened in the regular class where the contributions by the language minority children would easily have been overheard and attention given to more dominant language majority children.

When Norwegian is taught in two separate groups, however, the NL2 group has only one participant who is a native speaker of the target language – the teacher. As NL2 primarily will be offered to children whose competence in Norwegian is low, the peer group cannot compensate for this scarcity of communication partners with mother tongue competence in the target language. Language learning occurs in interactions between somebody competent in the target language and somebody in the process of learning it. When just one person in a group has a high competence, the organisation of activities should be such that everybody has ample opportunity to communicate with that person. Without due consideration to this aspect, the language learning environment of the child may be rather un-stimulating for periods of the lesson as Wong Fillmore (1994) has argued and as is also shown in the play episode reported in Chapter 12.

Sometimes it seems to be suggested that the difficulty mentioned here may be solved by just physically integrating the children in regular education the whole time. Such an attempt to solve the problem is definitely too simplistic. Being together physically does not ensure meaningful and language-stimulating interaction. We know that language minority children may be integrated in regular classrooms for a long time and still show weak development in the language of instruction (Wold 1993). For togetherness to be positive, much work should go into the organisation of activities to ensure that pupils with different competences in the target language actually have to work and communicate together.

Language development includes both the development of oral and written language. Klette (2003b:68) reports that they observed very few episodes of explicit reading or writing instructions in the third grade classrooms in their material. Klette and co-workers did not focus explicitly on the school situation of language minority children, and lessons in NL2 are not mentioned in the report. Language minority children were, however, obviously present in a number of their classrooms. At this point, our observations, primarily based on the NL2 classroom, are clearly at variance with their observations. Explicit reading and writing instruction was an important and recurrent activity in this classroom, both during the special autumn week and during the rest of the year. Tefre and Hauge also report about explicit reading and writing instruction.

In policy papers, a high level of competence in Norwegian is considered essential for success in schools and society. The teaching of NL2 is an important tool in the schools' work toward this aim. Too little is known about how this teaching could best be organised. We want to suggest, however, that the special organisation observed in the research class, with the form teacher in charge of the NL2 lessons, should be one of the possibilities considered in further practice and research.

## 17.4 Conclusions

We have observed in a multicultural third grade classroom. Many of our observations, and many of the themes discussed in Part III of this book could just as well have come from a monocultural one. This should be no surprise since the learning of language and learning in general have much in common and since the education of language minority children

shares the broad educational aims of the compulsory school. Thus, what we have observed must be understood within the framework of education in the Norwegian primary school some few years after the introduction of the national curriculum, *L97*, in 1997 (Curriculum 1999). Some other aspects of the classroom are, however, directly related to the multicultural composition of the class. This is the case for part of the organisation of the educational programme that includes NL2 lessons as well as mother tongue support and special lessons for some children. The content of these lessons is also clearly influenced by the multicultural background of the children and includes talking about important Pakistani persons and reading fairy-tales in Somali in mother tongue lessons, and encouraging children to learn and present riddles and the names of the days of the week in their mother tongue as well as Norwegian as part of the NL2 lessons.

When it comes to the teaching in the regular classroom, the relationship between the multicultural composition of the group of pupils and what goes on in the classroom seems to be more complicated. Thus, within the regular context, a mixture of serious considerations of the multicultural composition of the class with extended planning of activities to ensure that everybody could fully participate, as well as insensitivity to matches and mismatches between tasks given and the cultural background of the children, were observed. Some of the hard work had as its goal an inclusion of the language minority children in the language majority children's settings, but not all. Increasing the chances for success and mutual understanding by sharing experiences was also an essential component. Still, however, it seems reasonable to conclude that the multicultural character was primarily related to 'them' and not something that was expected to influence the educational content of what was directed to 'us' to a serious degree (Reid 1998).





## **Part IV**

### **Comparison**

In this part comparisons are drawn between the Dutch and Norwegian cases, presented in Part II and III of this book respectively. In doing so, the focus will mainly be on the didactic choices made by the case study teachers when responding to multilingualism in practice. Differences and similarities observed at the micro-level of the classroom, the macro level of education systems, and discourses with respect to teaching, learning, and multilingualism in the Netherlands and Norway are linked up. Showing how differently the task of being a primary school teacher in a multicultural classroom can be carried out might lead to further reflection on the part of teachers as well as educational policy makers.



## **Chapter 18**

### **Comparing the Dutch and Norwegian cases**

#### **18.1 Introduction**

The classroom episodes discussed in the previous chapters show that the Dutch and Norwegian regular classroom teachers portrayed are similar in many respects. They are both well experienced and committed to education, they have acquired certain knowledge about multilingualism, and they actually respond to multilingualism in practice. They are both being faced with similar choices to be made in realizing a language curriculum in a multilingual context (Jaspert & Kroon 1998), and they both draw on a broad pool of practical knowledge in making such choices (Anderson-Levitt 1987).

When teachers are studied in action, however, very different kinds of activities and interactions can be discerned in their classrooms. When these different activities are explored more thoroughly, some of the didactic choices underlying these activities and interactions can be reconstructed (Noblit & Hare 1988; Herrlitz 1994). In this chapter, these choices are examined. We link up differences observed at the micro-level of the classrooms and the macro-level of education systems and discourses with respect to teaching, learning, and multilingualism. In the comparison of the classroom practices, language is alternately considered as a subject in its own right and as the medium through which knowledge is (re)produced. Before turning to the comparison, we want to make two additional comments with respect to its underlying methodology.

What we compared were the practices observed in just two classrooms, a fourth grade class in the Netherlands with seven-year-old children and a third grade class in Norway with eight-year-old children, at particular days in the school year 1999/2000. These classrooms were selected because they fulfilled the requirements put forward in the project proposal (see Chapter 1), and because they were willing to cooperate with us in this research. We do not claim that they are typical of Dutch and Norwegian primary education in all respects. Furthermore, the comparisons we draw are primarily based on classroom observations covering one week, substantiated with observational data collected

during a number of other school days in the Netherlands and during more extended periods of observation in Norway. Thus, what we have observed in our classes is also only a small fraction of what happened in the selected classrooms throughout the school year.

However, the episodes reported represent concrete, naturally occurring instances of the kind of educational interactions the language majority and minority children of the two classrooms participated in during authentic school days within the frames and constraints given by national educational guidelines and more local practices in the two countries. As such they can be considered ecologically valid. The comparison of the different practices initiated interesting discussions among the researchers from the two countries about different forms of education in multicultural classes. We expect that showing how very differently the task of being a teacher in a multicultural classroom may be carried out has the potential to stimulate further reflections on teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms among teachers and educational policy makers too.

## **18.2 Different ways of organising separate language classes**

In both research schools, *de Rietschans* and *Ekelund*, special language classes had been organised for language minority pupils. The arrangements pertained to special classes for Norwegian/Dutch as a second language (special L2 classes) and special classes in languages other than Norwegian/Dutch (special L1 classes).

The organisation of L2 teaching was rather different in the two classes. In the Norwegian case, the teaching of L2 was much more extensive and more clearly separated from the teaching of L1 as compared to the Dutch case. The Norwegian class was, in six out of seven lessons in Norwegian, separated into an L1 class, and an L2 class. In the Dutch case, a specific focus on L2 was only given twice a week and each time only for approximately 30 minutes. In accordance with the different amount of time allocated to Norwegian or Dutch as a second language, these lessons served different functions. In the Norwegian case, the L2 classes were the main language lessons for this group of pupils, having as their aim the teaching of both oral skills and literacy. In the Dutch case, on the other hand, the L2 class had a supportive function,

focusing only on one aspect of language, i.e., vocabulary. The importance attached to L2 lessons in Norway is, furthermore, demonstrated by the fact that it was the regular classroom teacher who was in charge of the lessons. It must be added, though, that this is a rather unusual practice within the Norwegian context. The lessons in Dutch as a second language were given by a special teacher.

These different practices mirror the more formal and autonomous status given to Norwegian as a second language in Norway as compared to Dutch as a second language in the Netherlands. Norwegian as a second language is regulated by its own curriculum (*Norsk som andrespråk for språklige minoriteter* 1998) and comprises the same number of lessons as the Norwegian as a first language curriculum. This does not mean, however, that Norwegian as a second language will always be given in separate groups as was done in Karin's classroom. Language minority children should transfer to Norwegian as a first language tuition when they have sufficient knowledge of Norwegian to follow this tuition. Otherwise they can also continue with Norwegian as a second language and take their examinations in this variety of the Norwegian language curriculum. The grade in the subject, furthermore, will count as much as the grade in Norwegian as a first language when applying for upper secondary education or higher education. In contrast, in the Netherlands, even the rather restricted practice of separate L2 lessons observed in the class under study is not prescribed in national or local policy papers. Dutch as a second language is embedded in the educational compensatory policies. These policies merely facilitate the employment of additional staff if a school is attended by language minority pupils and do not specify whom, what, and how the additional staff should teach.

Another difference between the Dutch and the Norwegian classes concerns the ways in which it was decided which pupils were to attend the Dutch/Norwegian as a second language lessons. In the Dutch case, the school decided on the basis of the results of a vocabulary test. In Norway, the decision should, in principle, be jointly taken by the school and parents, giving heavy weight to the parents' voice. In Karin's class, some consultation with the parents might have taken place, but it is our impression that, in reality, the teacher was clearly the most influential in these decisions, basing these on her more overall evaluation of the children rather than on specific test results.

As regards the organisation of L1 classes, the observations in both the Dutch and Norwegian school show limited and casual use of mother

tongue education. At *de Rietschans*, despite the use of the term 'bilingual education' in the school's policy papers, only language support classes run by mother tongue teachers in Turkish and Moroccan-Arabic were organised, lasting no more than one hour per week per class. Language minority pupils with other mother tongues were thus excluded from this arrangement. It should be noted, though, that the Turkish and Arabophone pupils made up the largest groups of language minority pupils, both at the research school and on a national level.

At *Ekelund*, two mother tongue teachers were employed, one Urdu teacher and one Somali teacher. These two teachers were assigned to the research class for six and three hours per week, respectively. They used their teaching resources in varied ways, including direct mother tongue teaching and bilingual support, as well as for subject matter teaching in the regular classroom for both minority and majority pupils. In addition, one of the teachers functioned as a substitute for a teacher in special education. Of the thirteen language minority children in the class, only four were given any mother tongue support. On the basis of the observations from *Ekelund* and the other two schools included in this research, it can be concluded that how and to what degree the children's mother tongues were included in education varies widely from school to school depending on the initiatives, attitudes, and beliefs of local actors both at the school and municipal level. In some schools, for example, *Ekelund*, language minority pupils' opportunities to use their mother tongue in education at all during the school days primarily depended on whether they share this language with one of the very few mother tongue teachers at the school. This is the situation, even though there are central guidelines for instruction in and by the pupils' mother tongues.

It should also be added that in both countries discussions and changes of national and municipal guidelines of mother tongue education have resulted in great uncertainty for many school administrators and teachers at the time of the project. In the Netherlands, the possibilities for organising different forms of state-funded mother tongue education and language support have gradually been declining. In Norway, the situation is more complex. In the last ten to fifteen years, taking into consideration both regulations and practice, the conditions for different forms of mother tongue education and support seem to have gradually decreased. At the same time, scientific support for mother tongue teaching is increasing. In their recently published comprehensive study, for instance, Thomas & Collier (2002) have shown that instruction by means of and in

the mother tongue over years can have positive long-term effects on language minority pupils' school achievement.

### 18.3 Different ways of teaching

In the Dutch case, teaching was mainly based on the contents of the language arts and math textbook, both constituting complete, systematic programmes tailored to the core objectives of the official curriculum. In the Norwegian case, the subject matter was less textbook-driven and determined more by form teacher Karin and the pupils themselves. Although Karin clearly used textbooks in her teaching, she did not follow a textbook programme systematically. The materials she utilised were more varied than form teacher Ed's. She also included materials meant for lower years. It is, furthermore, more difficult to define her lessons in terms of the specific subject areas dealt with. Rather, one lesson could serve various aims, and these aims were not written down in the teacher's guide to the textbooks. In other words, her practice was not bound to rigid planning. The pupils raised subjects as well, and these initiatives were often taken up by Karin. What counts as knowledge to be learned, then, was not as predetermined as it was in Ed's classroom.

Consequently, the teaching practices in the Dutch classroom were of a rather formal character (Jenkins & Dixon 1983). The formal learning tasks in this context imply that a topic is worked at rather systematically over some period of time. The more formal type of education in the Dutch context seems to hold true for different aspects of language, including vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. In Ed's classroom, formal grammar lessons were observed. Such lessons would have been rather marked if they had occurred in Karin's classroom. Grammar was given scant attention by her during the observations, which is in accordance with the official Norwegian curriculum for the first four school years.

Furthermore, the emphasis on vocabulary learning was much higher in the Dutch class than in the Norwegian. In the Dutch class, planned and systematic work was observed on this important aspect of language competence, often in intentional learning tasks, both in the regular class and in Dutch as a second language and mother tongue lessons. In the Norwegian classroom, focused and formal treatment of word meanings was unusual. Inasmuch as such treatment was observed, it seemed rather spontaneous and unplanned. However, in order to get a full picture of the



opportunities for vocabulary learning in the context of classroom communication, opportunities for incidental learning have to be considered in addition to intentional learning tasks. In both the Norwegian and Dutch classroom, some possibilities for incidental learning were exploited (cf. Ellis 1994), but, in other episodes, the possibilities for vocabulary learning seemed to be overlooked.

The methodology adopted by the two teachers differed as well. Although the teacher's guides offered detailed instructions to Ed on how to teach the lessons, he also relied on his own preferences. For instance, in the vocabulary lessons, he followed the textbook in that he treated words which he selected from the textbook, but the way in which he tried to transmit knowledge of these words, namely, by means of definitions, differed significantly from what was suggested by the authors of the textbook. Karin was less occupied with transmitting certain subject matter through formal representations. It is as if she relied on more spontaneous acquisition of knowledge and skills. She seemed to elicit and guide meaningful communication that could serve as the basis for joint construction of knowledge. An example of this could be observed in the teaching of literacy where children were to write their own stories as homework – stories where orthography was not corrected. However, also more formal learning tasks were carried out regularly in the literacy classes. Both dictation, copying written texts, and different tasks focusing on orthography were frequently observed.

The communication observed in the two classrooms also revealed different interactional patterns. While in Ed's classroom, sequences of teacher initiation, pupil response, and teacher evaluation predominantly structured the interaction, in Karin's class, pupil initiations and evaluations frequently occurred as well. These interactional patterns reflect the different functions which language served in the two classrooms. In Ed's classroom, the main function of language was to verbalise academic knowledge, resulting in more decontextualised language (Snow *et al.* 1991). In Karin's classroom, language also served to narrate personal experiences, to verbalise own developing conceptions of the world and to comment on other's. These functions resulted in language use which is intrinsically bound to the context in which it emerges.

Apparently, Ed and Karin drew on different views on knowledge and learning. Ed's approach is based on the assumption that knowledge can be partitioned and transmitted through explicit instruction. This is what Wilkins (1976) refers to as 'synthetic' instruction: the teacher analyses

the system to be learned, for example, language or mathematics, and distills from it its elements and rules. The pupil, in turn, is faced with the task of synthesising the elements and rules made explicit by the teacher. In a more natural (Krashen 1994) or 'analytic' approach, it is the teacher who synthesises. When applied within the area of language, the teacher constructs tasks which elicit interaction and thus confronts the pupil with certain aspects of the language system to be learned. It is up to the pupil to deduce from his own and other's performance on the task the elements and rules of which the language is made up (Jaspaert 1996; Cummins 2000).

Having characterised Ed's and Karin's different ways of teaching, two questions can be posed. Firstly, how do these approaches promote or constrain certain ways of dealing with multilingualism? Central to this question is an analysis of how teachers react to the pupils' varied knowledge of the language of instruction and to languages other than Dutch/Norwegian. Secondly, to what extent are their approaches related to the education system within which they emerge? These questions are explored in the following sections.

### **18.4 Different ways of dealing with multilingualism**

In the episodes in which Ed was involved, several instances of teaching were observed in which knowledge was presupposed which was not shared by language minority pupils *per se*. Karin most probably also presented tasks to the pupils which were too demanding in terms of Norwegian language proficiency for some of the language minority pupils. For example, she was probably too reluctant to interpret problems in the mathematics lesson as being related to problems in understanding the language of instruction, i.e., Norwegian (Tuveng 2001; Tuveng & Wold forthcoming). The implications of the lack of adjustment to the children's level of competence differed, however, depending on the two teachers' teaching strategies.

In a synthetic approach, the teacher intends to establish shared knowledge of the language system through explicit instruction of the elements and rules of which the system is made up. In order for the pupils to make sense of the newly offered elements and rules, certain knowledge of the language system is presupposed – either because it was taught before or because it is taken to have been acquired naturally. In a spelling lesson

which took place in the Dutch case, for example, it was assumed that all the pupils were able to differentiate between long and short vowels. Only on the basis of this skill could a pupil draw on the rule 'if you hear a short sound, you need a double vowel letter'. Such teaching of aspects of the language system is most efficient when all pupils share the same preconceptions of Dutch.

In an analytic approach, the teacher intends to confront pupils with a task which can be carried out at different levels of difficulty. That is, the task allows pupils to process and use language at a level that matches his or her preconceptions. In an episode on rhyme from Karin's lesson, for example, a context was created that allowed pupils to develop hypotheses about what rhyming is. The task of completing verses with rhyming words for animals could be, and actually was, carried out in different ways by pupils with different levels of Norwegian language proficiency. Such teaching is most efficient when the task elicits language input and output which allows pupils to internalise elements and rules of the language system at their own level.

A synthetic approach leaves little room for the pupils to demonstrate their own knowledge, including their knowledge of their own mother tongues. In the regular Dutch classroom, no languages other than Dutch were heard. As a matter of fact, it was school policy to forbid the use of languages other than Dutch outside the mother tongue classes. The reason for this was twofold. First, it was thought impolite to exclude people from conversations conducted in a language they do not speak. Second, speaking languages other than Dutch was considered a missed opportunity to learn Dutch. The head teacher also strongly preferred mother tongue teaching to support the teaching of Dutch, rather than organising it as a subject in its own right. In the regular classroom, multilingualism did not manifest itself through reference to other languages spoken at the homes of pupils either. That is, multilingualism never became a topic of conversation or reflection.

The attitudes towards the children's mother tongues were different in the Norwegian case. The policy of the head teacher seemed to be somewhat ambivalent. In an interview, he told us that he would tell children whom he overheard speaking their mother tongue at school that it was impolite because he could not understand what they were saying. At the same time, he supported mother tongue teaching as a subject in its own right and expressed positive opinions about the importance of children's mother tongues in education. The regular classroom teacher,

Karin, was very positive towards the use of the children's mother tongues. In the Norwegian as a second language lessons, the use of mother tongues was encouraged on several occasions – a practice which is in accordance with recommendations in the curriculum (Curriculum 1999). She also often in other ways articulated and tacitly acknowledged her positive attitude towards the children's mother tongues.

To sum up, diversity is easier to handle if the selection of subject matter and the analysis of the system to be learned is left more to the pupils, as was the case in Karin's class. If, in other words, the knowledge to be learned is less predetermined and less clear-cut, diversity in the knowledge and skills of pupils is less of a problem. In contrast, in a synthetic approach, it is, first and foremost, the predetermined academic knowledge that counts, which leaves little room for the pupils to demonstrate their knowledge of, for example, other languages. From that perspective, Karin's and Ed's divergent ways of dealing with multilingualism appear to constitute responses to multilingualism which are inherent to their views on knowledge and learning.

### **18.5 Different education systems and discourses**

In the contemporary political educational debate in the Netherlands, strong emphasis is put on measuring performance. Schools are visited and evaluated regularly by the Inspectorate of Education, whose reports are available through the internet (see [www.onderwijsinspectie.nl](http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl)). Parents are free to decide which school they want their children to attend. Therefore, schools are required to report their past performance in the school's prospectus for parents. Rankings of school performances are published every year in a national newspaper. Most schools have adopted the monitoring system of the national institute for educational testing comprising a battery of standardised achievement tests for language and mathematics. More than seventy percent of all pupils also take the standardised end-of-school test, the outcome of which is used to determine which level of secondary education is best for the pupil. There is also a long tradition of handing out report cards three times a year and of having pupils repeat a year in case of serious underperformance.

In Norway, such a 'performativity discourse' (Jeffrey 2003) is much weaker. The national syllabus introduced in 1997 emphasises the importance of play, role play, drama, dance, and songs and theme-based

education in the first four years of primary education. The pupils' achievements are usually merely reported orally and informally to the parents at the primary stage, while pupils hardly ever repeat a year. At the time of the study, formal testing throughout primary education was highly unusual, and practitioners were not assessed in a systematic way by an inspectorate. However, presently in Norway, there is a very clear development towards a more performativity-oriented discourse. National and standardised tasks to evaluate pupils' performance have been developed and the results of evaluations made available to the public (NOU 2003). The differences between the Netherlands and Norway in terms of evaluations of pupils are also discussed by Seeberg (2003).

Arguably, performativity discourse encourages synthetic approaches to (language) teaching and learning. When the focus is on pupils' cognitive development, expressed in test scores, teachers are inclined to feel the need to maintain maximum control over the learning process. One way of doing this is to take over the learners' job of inferring elements and rules of the system to be learned and to present these explicitly to the whole class. In addition, pupil-centred instruction seems easier to organise in small classes. Some of the observations from Karin's teaching came from the L2 classroom consisting of no more than 12 pupils, while in Ed's teaching practices, 25 pupils were engaged.

The relative emphasis on performativity in the educational field in the years in which the study was carried out did not constrain educational practice to such an extent that only synthetic approaches were adopted in the Netherlands and that only analytic approaches were adopted in Norway. Other teachers who featured in some of the teaching episodes we analysed show that, in both cases, a range of approaches were pursued. However, it seems plausible that the Dutch and Norwegian educational contexts did encourage Ed's and Karin's ways of teaching, respectively, which in turn affected how they dealt with multilingualism.

## 18.6 Conclusions and discussion

In this chapter, the various ways of teaching and learning language in the classrooms observed in the Netherlands and Norway were characterised as follows. Second language learning in the Dutch class seemed, to a great extent, to be formal, decontextualised, and aimed at intentional learning by the children. Language as such was often focused on directly,

i.e., explicit representations of language were transmitted to the pupils. In the Norwegian classroom, on the other hand, language learning was more informal and based on a communicative perspective on language, relying on incidental and contextualised language learning. The teaching of literacy was an exception, however, as in this area formal language learning tasks were also carried out by the pupils.

These different approaches seemed to be related to the ways in which multilingualism was being dealt with. In Ed's approach, knowledge other than the predetermined academic knowledge to be transmitted, such as knowledge of the languages spoken by the minority pupils, was fairly irrelevant. Note that 'foreign' languages such as English are compulsory subjects in primary and secondary school in the Netherlands, while Turkish and other 'minority' languages are now slowly being introduced in secondary education as optional subjects. In transmitting knowledge, Ed took certain preconceptions for granted even though they might not be shared by all pupils. In Karin's approach, what counted as knowledge was defined less rigidly – it included, to a great extent, what emerged from interaction between pupils and between the teacher and pupils. The pupils' task to participate in this type of interaction allows them to learn without needing to rely so firmly on what is taken for granted as common knowledge by the teacher.

The comparison should, however, not be taken as a plea for analytic language instruction. The disadvantage of the synthetic approach might be compensated for by forming more or less homogeneous groups within a classroom on the basis of level of proficiency (this practice would, evidently, not be congruent with theories of learning emphasising that one learns from those who are more proficient), by raising teachers' awareness of heterogeneity, and by informing them with respect to the language skills they are inclined to take for granted. Rather, the study illustrates different ways of working in multicultural classrooms and the possible assets and problems easily associated with them. In the Norwegian classroom, the approach to learning was playful and contextualised, emphasising incidental learning, but activities also often seemed unplanned, and there often was much noise in the classroom. Such a playful and contextual approach may be more in agreement with constructivist and socio-cognitive theories of how children learn language at this age (cf. Snow *et al.* 1991) than the decontextualised methods seen in the Dutch classroom. The educational practice in the Norwegian classroom we observed, however, would benefit from more

systematic planning in order to use classroom time more efficiently. An increased focus on creating contexts and tasks for learning, i.e., 'contrived encounters' (Wood 1998:16) with explicit educational goals, would most probably enhance learning outcomes.

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## Appendix

### Transcription conventions

Convention	Example
English translations are given in roman type	One
Original Dutch and Norwegian utterances are given in italics	<i>Een</i>
If relevant, the original Dutch or Norwegian word is given in the translation as well	<i>natten</i> (the night)
Impressionistic accounts are given in brackets	(dissatisfied voice)
Marked stress on a syllable is indicated, if relevant, by a preceding semicolon	;under
Marked lengthening of a vowel is indicated, if relevant, by a preceding colon	<i>sla:pen</i>
Non-standard words or words pronounced in a non-standard way are marked with an asterisk	* <i>valen</i>
Occasionally, the International Phonetic Alphabet is used to represent certain phonemes, which are indicated by slashes.	/a/ /ø/
Unintelligible speech items are represented as x's.	eat the mouse xxx
Uncertain pupil identifications are marked with a question mark	Ivan (?)

